

# PUBLIC POLICY POSITIONS

## League of Women Voters of North Carolina

### NATURAL RESOURCES

#### Goals

Promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest by recognizing the interrelationships of air quality, energy, land use, waste management, and water resources.

#### NATURAL RESOURCES

**Organize State Agencies for the Management and Regulation of Natural Resources.** Consolidate environmental regulatory agencies in the state.

#### RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Promote resource conservation, stewardship and long-range planning, with the responsibility for managing natural resources shared by all levels of government.

#### OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS LEASING EXPLORATION AND DEVELOPMENT.

Promote changes in the policies, procedures, and regulations governing the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) and Tidelands.

Provide strict regulation to protect the environment, require responsible government management of the public's natural resources. Decisions on such protection and management must be based on a process that provides time and opportunity for full citizen participation.

The orderly and prudent development of publicly owned petroleum resources – both national and state – must be guided by national and state energy policies that recognize these resources as finite and not expendable. We support a decreased reliance on fossil fuels and an increased emphasis on conservation and the use of renewable energy sources. Such a policy would dictate greatly reduced frequency and size in lease sales with improved environmental safeguards.

Policies, procedures, and regulations must comply with all federal and state laws.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND POLLUTION CONTROL

Preserve the physical, chemical and biological integrity of the ecosystem, with maximum protection of public health and the environment.

**AIR QUALITY.** Support high air quality through control of pollutants including acid rains and toxins.

Support measures to reduce vehicular pollution, including inspection and maintenance of emission controls; changes in engine design and fuel types and development of more energy efficient transportation systems; regulations and reduction of pollution from stationary sources; regulation and reduction of ambient toxic-air pollutants; measures to reduce trans-boundary air pollutants, such as ozone and those that cause acid deposition.

**ENERGY.** Support energy goals and policies that acknowledge the United States as a responsible member of the world community; reduction of energy growth rates; use of a variety of energy sources, including alternative energy, conserving energy and using energy-efficient technologies; the environmentally sound use of energy resources, with consideration of the entire cycle of energy production; predominant reliance on renewable resources; policies that limit reliance on nuclear fission; action by appropriate levels of government to encourage the use of renewable resources, alternative energy and energy conservation through funding for research and development, financial incentives, rate-setting policies, and mandatory standards; mandatory energy conservation measures, including thermal standards for building efficiency, new appliance standards, and standards for new automobiles with no relaxation of auto-emission control requirements; policies to reduce energy demand and minimize the need for new generating capacity through techniques such as marginal cost or peak-load pricing or demand management programs; maintaining deregulation of oil and natural gas prices; assistance for low-income individuals when energy policies bear unduly on the poor.

**LAND USE.** Support land use policies of statewide and regional application that would effectively guide development to conserve resources and protect the natural environment. Support property tax policies which will promote wise use of land to meet present and future needs.

The North Carolina state government should assume the responsibility:

- to formulate and implement a comprehensive

## NATURAL RESOURCES

- state land use policy or to set policies in accordance with well-defined state goals.
- to prepare land resource inventories and to keep them updated with an emphasis on land capability.
  - to identify critical areas and to provide for their protection from unwise development, including development which would result in predictable and unjustified costs to taxpayers. Critical areas include fragile ecological systems, steep slopes, floodplains, and dunes;
  - to designate a clearinghouse and coordinating agency for land use policies of other state agencies, federal and state expenditures affecting land use as well as local and regional planning efforts.
  - to require that local, city and county governments do long-range planning and implementation according to state guidelines and in cooperation with regional planning offices.
  - to acquire and hold lands for public purposes in fee simple and also to acquire certain selected property rights in land by use of such devices as easements, leases, and options. "Public purposes" should include not only health, safety and welfare, but also recreation, housing, industrial siting, aesthetics, and environmental protection.
  - to coordinate location of transportation and delivery systems such as utility rights of way, power plant siting and dams.
  - to study and recommend property tax and appraisal methods to further state, regional, and local land use goals. Preferential treatment on property tax should be granted only in exchange for the public acquisition of some property right or some public service deemed necessary or desirable.
  - to see citizen participation at all levels of government, at formative stages of all major development projects. Wide publicity, public hearings, public consultation with local governments and regional planning agencies, and broad citizen representation on policy-making boards at all levels should be used in this effort.

**WATER RESOURCES.** Promote high water quality standards through monitoring, watershed protection regulation, stormwater management, basin-wide water resource planning, coastal water resource protection, and equitable financing.

**WASTE MANAGEMENT.** Support a comprehensive waste management program that would encourage waste prevention, reduction, recovery and recycling and that would discour-

age the underground storage of hazardous materials. Hazardous waste that cannot be reduced, stabilized or destroyed should be stored in long-term retrievable storage until adequate technology is available.

Support: policies to reduce the generation and promote the reuse and recycling of solid and hazardous wastes; policies to ensure safe treatment, transportation, storage, and disposal of solid and wastes in order to protect public health and air, water, and land resources; planning and decision-making processes that recognize suitable solid and hazardous wastes as potential resources; policies for the management of civilian and military high- and low-level radioactive wastes to protect public health and air, water, and land resources; establishment of processes for effective involvement of state and local governments and citizens in siting proposals for treatment, storage, disposal and transportation of radioactive wastes; full environmental review of treatment, storage and disposal facilities for radioactive wastes; safe transport, storage, and disposal of radioactive wastes.

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Promote public understanding and participation in decision-making as essential elements of responsible and responsive management of our natural resources.

*LWVNC and local Leagues may act upon any of the positions taken by LWVUS. A complete list of the LWVUS positions can be found at [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org).*