



# Issues for Action

A Guide to Public  
Policy Positions *of the*  
League of Women  
Voters of Oregon

# 2026

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## 2025 Action Committee

View our Legislative Priorities [here](#). For statements of position only, without history, please see [LWVOR Position Index](#).

Click on the [Oregon Legislative Information System \(OLIS\)](#) links for bills by session date (2007 and after). League testimony will be posted under Meeting Materials. With improved access to the legislative record, these links provide a permanent record of LWVOR Action testimony.

## Mission Statement

The League of Women Voters is a grassroots, nonpartisan political organization which encourages the informed and active participation in government in order to build better communities statewide. The state League's purposes are to influence public policy through education and advocacy, and to provide support for League members and the League organization.

## The League of Women Voters<sup>®</sup> of Oregon Vision Statement

We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good.

## League Principles

The League of Women Voters believes in representative government and in the individual liberties established in the Constitution of the United States.

The League of Women Voters believes democratic government depends upon the informed and active participation of its citizens and requires that governmental bodies protect the citizen's right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings, and making public records accessible.

The League of Women Voters believes that every citizen should be protected in the right to vote; that every person should have access to free public education that provides equal opportunity for all; and that no person or group shall suffer legal, economic, or administrative discrimination.

The League of Women Voters believes that efficient and economical government requires competent personnel, the clear assignment of responsibilities, adequate financing, and coordination among the different agencies and levels of government.

The League of Women Voters believes that responsible government should be responsive to the will of the people; that government should maintain an equitable and flexible system of taxation, promote the conservation and development of natural resources in the public interest, share in the solution of economic and social problems that affect the general welfare, promote a sound economy and adopt domestic policies that facilitate the solution of international problems.

The League of Women Voters believes that cooperation with other nations is essential in the search for solutions to world problems, and that development of international organizations and international law is imperative in the promotion of world peace.

## Applying a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Lens to Our Work

Applying a DEI lens is a way of examining a program, process, product, or otherwise with an eye toward how it will be perceived by a variety of communities, voices, and perspectives, and what barriers may exist that prevent it from being equitable or inclusive to everyone. We recommend Leagues apply a DEI lens to any position that they utilize.

When examining your work through a DEI lens you should ask these key questions:

1. Who is involved in the process? Leagues should consider whether this work impacts a group or community, if the voice of the impacted community is represented, and how diverse the group of decision-makers who represent a variety of relevant viewpoints is.
2. Who will be impacted? Leagues should consider who benefits or could be harmed, whether it helps meet the needs of underserved voters, how we considered various, specific marginalized groups, and how they'll be impacted.
3. What are the likely intended and unintended outcomes? Leagues should consider the issue we are trying to address, what we hope will happen, the potential negative impacts, who could be hurt by this, the supporting data or evidence, and how it might be perceived by others.
4. Does this align with our vision for an equitable and inclusive organization? Leagues should consider how equity is addressed, what barriers it might place in the way of achieving equity, and how it impacts the organization's culture.
5. What changes could we make to improve equity? Leagues should consider the short- and long-term goals, policies or bylaws that need to be added or amended, the benefits to members, and the benefits for partners and/or members of the community.

Leagues should be aware that this process will take more time in the beginning, but as the DEI lens is regularly applied it will become easier to move through the questions, identify opportunities, and react in a way that bolsters DEI. In instances where Leagues go through the questions and find that the DEI is not present fully or partially, Leagues should work to include as many factors as possible, consider obstacles that led to gaps in one area versus others, and determine how to continue to build on this work any time the League takes action.

In 2020, LWVUS adopted a resolution to combat systemic racism and ensure equal protection under the law for BIPOC communities.

## League Action

LWVOR Advocacy tracked the rollout of SB 577 (2019), which addresses bias crime enforcement, and attending monthly Coalition Against Hate Crimes meetings. These efforts intersected with the League's broader priorities, including connections between climate migration, human rights, and racial equity, emphasizing the need for systemic reform at both state and national levels.

## Positions and Action

This publication outlines the current positions for the League of Women Voters of Oregon (LWVOR) and a brief summary of state actions taken. Ongoing interpretations of the positions are shown by date in bold.

### Positions

League involvement really begins when a study is adopted at League Convention. Action possibilities are kept in mind when a study is undertaken and the areas of emphasis are determined. When the members have completed a study, local Leagues send their member agreement reports to the LWVOR board. From these reports the LWVOR board adopts a Statement of Position.

The statement of position is an expression of general agreement by a substantial and representative number of members about certain governmental policies. All state positions must be consistent with board approved policies, a principle applying at all levels of League functioning. For the board, the position is the yardstick against which to measure governmental proposals.

Each position affirms a basic philosophy in general terms, defines the goals desired, and establishes guidelines against which proposals can be measured. Each position is reexamined biennially by local Leagues in their program planning discussions before each biennial convention.

## Action

Action may be taken after a statement of position has been adopted. The state board appoints an action committee chair and coordinators. This group may be involved in many forms of action at the state level, such as testifying before legislative committees, conferring with state officials and agencies, or working with other groups having common interests. League action neither supports nor opposes candidates or political parties.

Local League and individual member participation in state action is encouraged in a variety of ways. League members recommend priorities for action for board approval. Information on state action items is included in the board packets going to local Leagues, and in the *Voter*. During the legislative session, the weekly *Legislative Report* describes state issues and activities. Action alerts are sent to local Leagues for their action.

Local Leagues may take action on behalf of LWVOR on state advocacy issues by having their president contact their local legislators or other persons at the state level, or by developing letters to the editor.

Also, League members may use these materials as resource content for their individual activities, such as letters to legislators, letters to the editor, and in personal contacts, but not in the name of the League.

## Protocol for Local Action on State and National Positions

In League action, it is important to avoid public confusion and to assure that state and national positions are being interpreted consistently. To assure that local Leagues do not take divergent stands on issues affecting other Leagues, it is essential to work together. Therefore, if a local League wishes to take local action based on a state or national position, it is necessary to discuss and clarify with the state president or action chair how the proposed action will affect the whole League.

The local League should outline the local problem and the action planned as well as specify the state or national position(s) visualized as the basis for action. If a local League board disagrees with the views of the president or action chair, they may bring the matter to the state board.

As explained in the LWVUS publication League Basics (formerly In League), when action has both state and national implications or involves more than one League, "it

is important to work closely with the affected League(s) to develop a cohesive action plan. As issues grow more complex, one League's position may differ from a nearby League's on a given issue. This fact does not necessarily mean an impasse that forecloses action. It does mean that everyone involved has to do some creative thinking toward a cooperative solution. It is a good idea for Leagues to communicate with their neighboring Leagues on their respective action agendas. This communication not only will serve to spotlight areas of mutual interest but also could head off any possible conflicts."

## Local Positions

A local League may testify on a state legislative matter that particularly affects the local area when it has an appropriate position and the state League has been notified.

A local League may be requested by the state to testify on a legislative bill if the state does not have a position, but the local League has an appropriate position that addresses the issue statewide.

Adopted by LWVOR Board December 1999 Reaffirmed by

LWVOR Board November 2001

The League statements of position on the following pages are also available on the LWVOR website: [www.lwvor.org](http://www.lwvor.org). If you need a copy of all positions without Position History or Position Implementation, please download it from our website.

# Governance

## Campaign Finance Reform

**LWVOR uses the LWVUS position on campaign finance reform as the basis for legislative and statewide action. Members adopted the position in 1973 following a study initiated by the 1972 Convention. The League supports measures to "improve methods of financing political campaigns in order to ensure the public's right to know, combat corruption and undue influence, enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office and promote citizen participation in the political process."**

### Position Implementation - Campaign Finance Reform

1993

The League supported a campaign finance reform measure passed by the Senate but killed in the House. It provided for contribution limits, voluntary spending caps, some public financing, bans on pass-throughs and limits on labor and corporate contributions. As a result, the League joined with Common Cause, OSPIRG, and the American Party in writing and circulating a campaign finance reform petition that would be voted on in November 1994.

1995

Late in the 1995 session, leaders in both the House and Senate attempted major revisions (repeal) of the campaign finance reform measure passed by 72 percent of the voters in November 1994. The League worked vigorously with other members of a coalition to prevent the legislation from reaching the floor. It did not, and the new law remains in effect. The court challenge filed in February is slowly moving. Because there is a precedent from Missouri and the District of Columbia cases to uphold the strict contribution limits, it is hoped that the core of the campaign finance law will be maintained. It will be important to monitor the impact of the 1996 elections and to be prepared to discuss modifications, if necessary, in 1997.

1997

The contribution limits passed by voters in 1994 were in effect during the 1996 election cycle along with voluntary spending limits and bans on pass-through funds and personal use of campaign money.

There was a significant decrease in campaign spending as expected, but an increase in independent expenditures on behalf of candidates which cannot be limited by law. The reform was working, but the Oregon Supreme Court declared the contribution limits and ban on pass-throughs unconstitutional in February 1997. LWVOR worked diligently during the 1997 session to prevent elimination of the voluntary spending limits, the ban on personal use of funds and the tax credit for contributions to candidates who agreed to spending limits. The Legislature was unable to further erode campaign finance reform.

A small working group on reform, under the sponsorship of state Senator Kate Brown, worked during the session on two possible reform measures: public funding (four bills were introduced, but none received a hearing) and a constitutional amendment to allow contribution limits. The group has now been expanded, and the League is supporting a proposal for public financing in cooperation with Common Cause and ACLU. OSPIRG is proposing the constitutional amendment. The group expects to have a bill drafted for the 1999 session that calls for public financing of statewide elective offices and legislative seats during the general election. If the Legislature fails to act, the measure will be put forth as an initiative in 2000. The campaign finance group is meeting regularly and is seeking foundation support.

1999

Identical bills providing for public funding of legislative and statewide office candidates were introduced in the Senate and House. No hearings were held on the substance, but the House measure passed containing only election procedures. These bills were sponsored by the Oregon Working Group for Campaign Finance Reform of which the League is a member. The governor vetoed a bill that would have wiped out the remainder of Ballot Measure 9 (1994), voluntary spending limits and the political tax credit for adhering to the limits. However, the political tax credit has now been expanded and little monitoring is done on the voluntary spending limits. In addition, the House passed a bill which would have essentially downsized the disclosure requirements and made the tracking of contributions and expenditures extremely difficult. The Senate refused to pass it. The League worked in coalition to oppose this bill. The Political Accountability Act, based on the legislative proposals for a public funding system, has been filed as an initiative with League support.

2000

The League worked in coalition to pass Measure 6, the Political Accountability Act, a public funding proposal designed to level the playing field and move special interest money out of Oregon politics. The League played a large role, with the president chairing the PAC. It was defeated by a last minute opposition campaign.

2001

During the 2001 legislative session, one measure was proposed to limit spending, along with limited public funding, and another to place contribution limits in the constitution, both of which received hearings but did not move out of committee. The Legislature did pass a disclosure statute requiring immediate notification by legislators of any contributions received during the session, applying also to state office holders. Perhaps the best improvement is a new law, which requires additional reporting on contributions and expenditures prior to and after the Primary election both by candidates and petition campaigns.

2003-04

Several contribution limit bills were introduced in the 72nd legislative session, including both simple constitutional amendments to allow limits as well as statutes spelling out the comprehensive limitations on candidates, donors, and organizations. Most of the activity took place in work groups formed by the interested legislators or by the League, Common Cause and the Money in Politics Research Action Project (MiPRAP), with legislators, labor representatives, and party representatives participating. Since disclosure of campaign contributions and expenditures is the only means for checking on campaign financing, the League and others opposed a measure which would have eliminated donor information such as occupation and city address. It died in the House the morning of adjournment. The League continued to oppose proposals that put both limits and details into the Constitution. One initiative that does this is being circulated for the 2004 ballot. We have concerns about cluttering the Constitution with the statutory details.

The League co-sponsored a CFR Stakeholders Summit in October, and the group will continue meeting in 2004 to plan for possible action in the 2005 Legislature and beyond.

The CFR stakeholders group that started in 2004 continued and developed into the Building Better Campaign (BBC) Coalition, and the League formally became part of the coalition.

The BBC continued the discussion about strategies to strengthen Oregon's disclosure provisions through legislative action, an initiative campaign, or working with other groups who were proposing initiatives. The League was represented on the Secretary of State's Campaign Finance Disclosure Panel, which proposed several recommendations for improving disclosure. The League did not support the proposed constitutional amendment initiative to establish contribution limits and the statute for implementation put forward by Money Is Not Democracy (MIND), and these initiatives did not qualify for the 2004 ballot. The League and BBC did, however, offer suggestions to MIND and Democracy's Edge for revisions for new proposed initiative petitions for 2006.

## 2004

The BBC proposed a one-line constitutional amendment initiative (#31) and a contribution limits statute (**SB 780**), with the idea of furthering legislative discussion, but these went nowhere. Two Senate bills seeking a single sentence constitutional amendment to enable contribution limits were heard in the Rules committee, but did not move forward. The House did not consider any campaign finance limits.

The League decided not to support two campaign finance initiative petitions (#8 constitutional amendment, #37 statute) because the constitutional amendment would require a 3/4 vote of both houses of the Legislature, or an initiative, to change any CFR law.

The League had much better success supporting the report of the Secretary of State's Public Disclosure Panel. This report was largely adopted as **HB 3458** in the waning hours of the Legislature's long session, partly as a result of allegations about and later resignation and conviction of Rep. Dan Doyle for false campaign finance reports. **HB 3458** provides for nearly continuous campaign finance disclosure through a web-based computer database and will be a great resource for voters and news media. **HB 3458** also contained numerous other small provisions that will improve campaign finance laws and disclosure.

## 2007

There was little action on campaign finance this session. Public Commission on the Oregon Legislature (PCOL) recommended a Campaign Finance Reform Commission to study the issues and make recommendations. The League supported the bill in the House Elections, Ethics and Rules committee, and it passed the House late in the session. It was not heard in the Senate.

The good news is that ORESTAR, the online filing system for reporting campaign contributions and expenditures (C&E reports) is up and running. It will make the "who" and "how much" part of both individual and issue campaigns much more transparent and accessible to the public.

2009

While action didn't come until late in the session, there was an undercurrent of interest in campaign finances because of Measure 47 (2006), an initiative which passed but has not been implemented. The statute sets up stringent campaign limits and other limitations, but the accompanying constitutional amendment to allow limits did not pass so the Attorney General and Secretary of State declared it impossible to use. Democracy Reform Oregon, formerly Money in Politics Research Action Project, sponsored HB 3009 which would have enacted broader limits and overcome Measure 47. The bill was supported by the League, both with testimony and visits to members of the House Rules Committee. It died in committee but did set the stage for further work during the interim. Another constitutional amendment has been filed by the supporters of Measure 47.

2011

There was no significant discussion of campaign finance during the session. Disclosure remains the only check on candidate and issue campaign contributions and expenditures. ORESTAR, Oregon's on-line campaign finance reporting system, continues to improve and received funding.

2013

More transparency regarding independent expenditures for both candidate and petition campaigns will be required by League supported legislation. Contributions made by individuals or entities apart from regular campaign committees must now be filed electronically with the Secretary of State and will be placed on ORESTAR for public access. This disclosure is vital in Oregon because disclosure is our only means of following contributions and expenditures to track campaigns and this will shed light in a grey area of independent support.

2015

The continuing effort to enable campaign contribution limits came with SJR 5. The required constitutional amendment was supported by the League and numerous other good public policy groups in a coalition. Despite support from a majority of senators as well as members of the House, the bill was never granted a vote in the Senate Rules Committee.

The proposal would revise the Oregon constitution to allow limits to campaign contributions. One of the concerns is Ballot Measure 47 (2006), an initiative statute that set limits and has not been implemented because the accompanying constitutional amendment (Measure 46, 2006) was defeated. If any amendment allowing contributions to be limited passed, would M47 automatically be operational? Most supporters of reform, including the League, agree that the M47 limits are too low. However, the implementation issue has not been resolved. There may be a citizen initiative proposal for the 2016 election.

In **HB 2178** a requirement for contributions over \$2500 made in the 14 days preceding an election to be reported within 48 hours, was removed from the bill. It would have added critical, late disclosure information about campaigns. Instead, the Secretary of State was required to establish a Campaign Finance Reform Task Force of 17 members, representing political parties, unaffiliated voters, four legislators, not for profit organizations, and explicitly the LWVOR. Four meetings are being held and a recommendations report is due to the Legislature by December 31. The Task Force will exist until July 2, 2017.

2016

**HB 4085A**, which mandated transparency regarding independent expenditures for candidates and ballot issues through ORESTAR, was rejected in Ways and Means even though it was positively referred by both the House and Senate Rules committees. The League supported the proposal. **SJR 25**, a constitutional amendment to set political campaign contribution limits, did not receive a hearing despite support from 18 organizations. Both issues are expected to be brought forward in 2017.

2017: **HB 2505** improved campaign finance transparency.

## Citizen Participation and Access

**"The League of Women Voters believes democratic government depends upon the informed and active participation of its citizens and requires that governmental bodies protect the citizen's right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings, and making public records accessible."**

### LWVUS Principles

**"We must promote an open governmental system that is representative, accountable and responsive." LWVUS Representative Government position**

Citizen participation and access are also important parts of LWVOR positions on Land Use and the Judicial System, and LWVUS positions on Campaign Finance, Citizens Right to Know/ Citizen Participation, Environmental Protection and Pollution Control, Natural Resources Public Participation, United Nations, and International Relations Trade Policy. Because of these scattered positions, we collect here our combined history of advocacy for Citizen Participation and Access.

## Position Implementation - Citizen Participation and Access

1999

One of the major losses of the session was the death of **HB 2805** in the Senate Judiciary Committee after passing easily in the House. This "Anti-SLAPP" (Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation) bill would have provided some immunity from lawsuits for citizens giving public testimony. The League played a high-profile role in this battle to protect citizen participation.

A number of bills were introduced that were designed to overturn local governments' constitutional home rule rights. One was a bill to overturn Eugene's Toxic-Right-to-Know Ordinance. [See Hazardous Materials.] An attempt to prohibit communities from choosing to vote on annexation measures (**HB 3389**) failed. Also failed was a bill barring local governments from prohibiting smoking in bars (**HB 2806**); as well as another (**HB 3005**) prohibiting local government from regulating density. **HB 2658**, which prohibits local governments from adopting inclusionary zoning (a requirement that a housing development contain a certain number or percentage of units in a specific price range, usually affordable to households at or below the area's median income level), was passed and signed by the governor. However, the bill did allow "voluntary" regulations designed to increase the supply of affordable housing.

2002

Finally, an "Anti-SLAPP" (Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation) bill—**HB 2460B** passed, protecting citizens against frivolous lawsuits designed to discourage public participation. It was signed into law by Governor Kitzhaber on June 26, 2001 and is now ORS 30.142.

The League was a leader in the coalition working to pass this bill. See [Natural Resources: Citizen Participation](#) for more information.

2005

In 2004, after observing for many years the erosion of the public's access to the Oregon Legislature's legislative process, the League made restoring access and public participation in the process its highest priority. Even though we did not actively support legislation directly addressing this during the 2005 Legislative session, we worked both before the session started and during the session to improve access for citizens. We also worked very hard to alert the public to this problem. This was a coalition effort. We concentrated on 48-hour advance notice for all public hearings and were successful. We were not as successful in some other areas—balanced representation in legislative work groups, presentation of public testimony before that of public officials and invited guests, and elimination of budget notes as a law-making tool.

**SB 1084** established the *Public Commission on the Oregon Legislature* (PCOL). This legislation provided for the study and evaluation of the Legislature's administration, procedures, facilities, staffing and overall capacity. League members have monitored the PCOL full commission and committee meetings during the Interim in 2005-06, making sure any changes do not put up barriers to public access to the legislative process.

2007

The change in leadership and the memory of previous problems resulted in fewer access issues. The leadership of the Legislature started by incorporating into the rules many of the things the League has been pushing for in past sessions. One new rule was three-day notice for hearings. The hearings were handled in a more democratic way, and every member of a committee as well as the public had an opportunity to be part of the process. Many committees (especially Land Use and Ways and Means) had extra public hearings to guarantee that the public was heard.

During the session, we also watched the Ways and Means Committee closely to make sure that budget notes were not setting public policy, but only making sure that agencies were being accountable for their programs. However, many public policy bills involving expenditures, after being passed from the original House or Senate committees, were referred to Ways and Means, and policy changes were made without public input. This is an area of concern that we will need to continue to monitor. The Ways and Means Committee also held hearings around the state; the League testified whenever we had positions and the opportunity.

Because of all our hard work in previous sessions, this Legislature was willing from the beginning to make the process more open and accessible. However, there are still areas of concern (e.g., invited testimony is always taken first, and the public is still last to testify). In the future, we must build on our successes and continue to be watchful.

2009

Changes in legislative leadership and memories of past problems meant we were able to start the 2009 session with fewer access issues, because the rules incorporated many of the things we have been pushing for in past sessions. There was advance notice for hearings. The hearings were handled in a more democratic way, and every member of the committee as well as the public had an opportunity to be part of the process. We were asked our opinion on bills even during work sessions, including occasions when we had not testified or testified on earlier versions of bills.

We watched the Joint Ways and Means Committee even more closely than in the past few sessions. Because of severe budgetary problems facing the state, all bills with a price tag went to Ways and Means, although sometimes this committee made changes and added amendments to the public policy without a public hearing or public input.

Because of our past monitoring of budget notes the committee tried to make sure that budget notes were not setting public policy, but only making sure that the agency was being accountable for their programs.

There are still areas of concern, (i.e., “invited testimony only” restrictions and making the public testify last). Also, since the economy may take a while to improve, we must constantly be monitoring the Ways and Means process to make sure that public policy is not included in budget bills as well as bills referred from other committees.

Note: If citizen access issues were part of specific legislation, then issues are covered in their respective subject matter.

2011

We continued to build on our success of previous sessions in attempting to keep the process open and accessible for all. Again this session we were under severe budgetary restraints, all bills with any money involved had to go through Ways and Means. Thus there were some access problems.

We continued to watch the Joint Ways and Means Committee more closely. We were especially looking for bills referred from other (policy) committees where “W’s and M’s” made changes and added amendments to the public policy without a public hearing or public input on these changes. We had to continually monitor this and try and bring it to the committee’s attention when public policy was involved. We were not always successful. There were many budget notes this session, but the committee tried to make sure that budget notes were not setting public policy but only making sure that the agency was being accountable for their programs.

Another area of concern is that the Legislature is doing more and more electronically (makes immediate access better than previous sessions, however we are not sure what is happening to archives and future generations being able to access all the records of today). The Internet access continues to improve with each session as upgrades are made to the legislative website. We continued to encourage members to watch the hearings held in Salem electronically and submit their testimony and action letters electronically.

Because of new and inexperienced committee chairs, some committees were not run as they should have been. We needed to monitor to be sure all the rules were followed correctly.

## 2013

A new state government structure called Regional Solutions Teams, Centers and Priorities has been set up by the Governor. The Centers are located in local community colleges or universities and are staffed by a number of state agencies. **SCR 4** passed directing state agencies to participate and to prioritize time and resources for providing technical assistance. \$1 million was budgeted for each of the 11 Teams and the Governor’s Office was authorized to hire 3 staff people to help implement Regional Priorities.

**HB 2620** authorizes the Governor to develop a plan to align state economic and community development programs with regional and community based development programs. The League succeeded in requiring that the public be part of helping to develop such a plan and to educate citizens about the Regional Solutions program, and now have a League member on the Steering Committee working to implement the legislation.

**SB 251** did not pass, but would have allowed the Governor to “resolve” issues among various permits.

The League opposed this bill since the Legislature already sets policies and agencies have processes to administer these permits. Changes to permitting need to be considered with a full public process.

The League testified on **HB 2560**, as filed, relating to who can serve on rulemaking committees. But the bill was narrowed to assure that those other than officer, employees or agents of the appointing agency be appointed. The League felt this clarification would protect citizen involvement. It passed.

The League opposed **SB 300** related to appointments of Boards and Commissions. We support the Governor's power to appoint heads of departments with the consent of the Senate. However, we were concerned by the concept being discussed that would allow the Governor to broadly remove and replace Board and Commission members "at will". This could lead to wholesale membership change and lose their historical perspective and knowledge of issues. It could also mean a complete Board or Commission vacancy should the Governor remove members and the Senate not agree to new appointees.

The League testified in opposition to amendments considered to **HB 2841** that would have required that special notification be given to the mining community should the Dept. of Environmental Quality consider rulemaking on their business. We support the inclusion of notice to a broad range of interest groups in ANY rulemaking, but not special notice to one group. The bill died in the Senate.

2014

The League continued work on development of the Regional Solutions program by serving on the Steering Committee for HB 2620. We encouraged members to attend regional public meetings to learn more about the program and to provide input on the final report. Our participation improved the final product, which noted the importance of having more staff members from natural resources agencies if they are required to participate in this program. We testified on **HB 4015**, first opposed, then supporting after amendments required that natural resource agencies do a plan explaining how they will participate in this program. The bill also requires a public involvement plan to be developed to assure citizens can participate as region "priorities" are selected.

We also monitored as **HB 5201A** allocated \$10 million to the Oregon Business Development Department to be expended on a series of Regional Solutions projects around the state. We encouraged legislators to fund specific projects under this program rather than creating a new "slush fund" which they did.

2015

We supported **HB 3417** that would have required a 30-day notice before Regional Solutions Regional Advisory Committee meetings. It did not pass but we were promised rulemaking to increase notice to 14 days and set up a more consistent process for these committees. We also followed the budget of the Governor's Office (**HB 5021**) where the staff for this program is funded and **SB 5525**, the budget of the Oregon Business Development Department and **HB 5030** where funding for Regional Solutions projects were housed. Our advocacy narrowed the budget authorization to only capital projects that were specifically listed. We testified in opposition to **SB 201** that would have added "alignment coordinators" to some agencies but would be assigned to the Governor's Office as additional assistance to Regional Solutions. The bill did not pass and these positions were not created.

The League testified against **HB 2938A** that would have allowed city charters to be violated and annexations to occur without meeting local charter requirements. The bill died in Committee.

The League opposed both **HB 2497** that would have required agencies to maintain an extra notice list for rulemaking and **HB 2724** that would have allowed state rules to be waived on a "case by case" basis. Both died in Committee.

2016

There were two political maneuvers that made problems for access during the short session. In the House, an old rule was used to require during the third reading of some bills that they be read in their entirety, greatly delaying the process. Also, some Legislators required (selectively only for bills that particular legislator disagreed with) that some people had to be SWORN IN before they could testify. This is not illegal, and in fact is part of ORS, and if your testimony is false, it is a class C Felony and carries a fine. This was used by some to intimidate the public. We will have to see whether these two practices are used in the future or fade away with the end of this session.

2018

The League provided testimony on **SB 1514** to express concerns related to a proposed sunset review of state boards, commissions, committees, task forces and other executive dept. entities due to the extensive work required to review these groups and the League's recognition of the value of citizen involvement in the agencies they serve. The bill died in committee.

In May, Governor Brown announced the selection of five housing pilot projects across the state, selected under the Regional Solutions Cabinet and in partnership with local businesses and nonprofits (In Donald, Pacific City, Warm Springs, Harney County and Lincoln County).

The League continues to monitor the Regional Solutions program. The Sept. Emergency Board allocated the \$4 million from the 2017 budget allocation using the process adopted by Business Oregon with input from the League to assure adequate public process.

2020

The League sent a letter to Governor Kate Brown, Legislative Leadership and Legislative staff at the end of 2020 with appreciation for the public access during the multiple special sessions in the face of the Covid epidemic and requested access to the legislature during the 2021 session.

2021 *(Revised 2021, Peggy Lynch)*

The League supported **SB 286**, a bill that would replace the current Environmental Justice Task Force in the Governor's Office with a new Council housed within the Dept. of Environmental Quality. The bill did not pass but the Task Force will continue.

The League followed **HB 2334**, a bill that would have increased the burden on agency rulemaking by allowing for an exemption from enforcing a rule if it has an economic impact on 'small businesses'. The bill did not pass.

2023 *(Revised Oct. 2023, Peggy Lynch)*

**SB 42** would have required agencies to add even more factors related to business when calculating cost of doing the rulemaking and the consequences of same. The League provided [testimony](#) in opposition. **SB 38** would have required certain agencies to process permits even if state or federal laws or rules changed during the permit processing. The League provided [testimony](#) in opposition. Neither bill passed this session.

The League provided [testimony](#) on **HB 5025**, the omnibus higher education budget, in support of the Oregon Consensus/Oregon Solutions programs at Portland State University. It is unclear if this funding was provided but the program will continue.

2025 *(Rev. Sept. 2025 Peggy Lynch)*

The League expressed [opposition](#) to **HB 2692**, a bill that would have amended Oregon administrative rules around rulemaking processes. We resubmitted the testimony to the Senate and reached out to legislators with our concerns. This was a theme of concern this session. We also engaged with the Dept. of Land Conservation and Development and the Governor's office. The Governor provided additional guidance to state agencies on rulemaking. The League provided [testimony](#) in opposition to **HB 3569**, a bill that requires an agency that appoints a rules advisory committee with regard to rules implementing legislation to invite certain legislators to participate on the committee as nonvoting members, but there was a [signing letter](#) with Governor's instructions on how agencies should implement the bill which addressed some of the League's concerns.

The League continued to monitor other legislation that would change public policy on the rulemaking process. The purpose of rulemaking is to provide guidance to state agencies after legislation has passed to assure the intent of the legislation is implemented. A full public process with fair participation in rulemaking needs to be assured without reopening the legislation itself, a purview of the legislature. The Governor's job is to assure that adopted legislation is implemented. Each branch of government should stay in its lane. Litigation should be an avenue to address any conflict between the other branches.

The League continues to monitor the Regional Solutions Program. LWVOR has supported the multi-agency collaboration and the eleven Regional Advisory Committees and attend their meetings as we can to learn about specific issues from around the state. Here is the Regional Solutions [website](#).

## Constitutional Provisions

Adopted 1963; Revised 1980

***A. The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that the Oregon Constitution should be a basic framework of state government, free of obsolete material and statutory detail. It should guarantee basic democratic rights to the people of the state by:***

1. *Providing a bill of rights;*
  2. *Reserving initiative and referendum powers to the people.*
- B. The Oregon Constitution should provide for a legislative assembly that is:**
1. *Apportioned on a population basis, under a system that provides flexibility, adequate safeguards and enforcement procedures ensuring reapportionment after every federal census;*
  2. *Adequately salaried with the amount of salary specified by statute;*
  3. *Permitted to meet in annual sessions.*
- C. The executive branch should be strengthened by provisions:**
1. *Fixing authority and responsibility in the office of governor. The governor should be given the power to reorganize the administrative functions of the state government subject to legislative review and possible veto;*
  2. *Limiting the number of departments;*
  3. *Granting the power to appoint department heads to the governor with the consent of the Senate;*
  4. *For an item veto and an executive budget;*
  5. *Setting salaries by statute;*
  6. *Allowing no constitutional impairment of the state civil service system.*
- D. Administrative - Post Audits (concurrence, 1980)**
1. *Post audits of state and local governments should be conducted in an apolitical manner.*
  2. *The office performing post audit should function independently of the Legislature and the executive department.*
  3. *The office should be given appropriate enforcement tools.*
- E. The Oregon Constitution should provide for a judicial system uniform in organization and administration with:**
1. *Full time, legally trained judges paid by the state;*
  2. *Rule-making power vested in the Supreme Court;*
  3. *Mandatory retirement of judges;*
  4. *Judicial appointments that are made by the governor from a slate presented by a judicial nominating committee.*
- F. The Oregon Constitution should provide for effective local government (1943, 1963) by:**
1. *Allowing city and county home rule;*
  2. *Reserving to the Legislature authority to provide for local government flexibility to meet future needs.*
- G. Revision of the constitution in the future should be permitted by use of the constitutional convention, initiative amendment, or legislative amendment.**

Statutes, constitutional amendments, and administrative decisions that implement these positions may be supported by the League.

## Position History – Constitutional Provisions

1971

At the May LWVOR Convention it was agreed that piecemeal revision of the Oregon Constitution was the most practical direction.

## Cybersecurity

Adopted: January 19, 2021

**Cybersecurity is the prevention of damage to, protection of, and restoration of computers, electronic communications systems, electronic communications services, wire communication, and electronic communication, including information contained therein, to ensure its availability, integrity, authentication, confidentiality, and nonrepudiation. This position statement addresses Elections, Information Security, Personal Information Protection, and Electronic Business and Social Media.**

### A. Elections Security:

**The election process is the foundation of our representative form of government. Election integrity, accuracy, transparency and trustworthiness require vigilance to ensure security protections. Security requirements include and are not limited to:**

- verifiable ballots;
- ballots that can be recounted and audited;
- up-to-date hardware and software, supported by vendors, tested, and secure;
- protected voter registration databases;
- election staff/volunteers with cybersecurity expertise;
- cyber-damage contingency plans;
- risk-limiting audits;
- attention to disinformation and misleading ads.

**Protect voters' ability to exercise an informed opinion on electoral matters. Explore limiting the unfettered electronic circulation and amplification of election misinformation (e.g., targeted disinformation campaigns, manipulated media, anonymous disinformation, and algorithmic and robotic disinformation campaigns).**

## **B. Information Security**

**Government, individuals, and organizations (including private sector and critical infrastructure), all require strong cybersecurity protections and effective deterrents to assure national security, economic and social stability, and personal information integrity.**

- **Create consistent information privacy laws and regulations across all organizations (government, private, for-profit, and non-profit) that eliminate gaps, inconsistencies, and overlaps.**
- **Regulate all technology-enabled organizations (e.g., internet platforms, online intermediaries, business-to-consumer platforms), not shifting sectors, so that organizations are subject to a uniform set of laws and regulations.**
- **Regulate all categories of information in the same way, regardless of the type of organization or sector that collects that information.**
- **Apply a baseline set of regulations to all types of information, regardless of type of organization or sector collecting that information.**
- **Apply regulatory requirements to organizations according to their size and complexity, the nature of data covered, and the risk posed from exposing private information.**
- **All information (including third-party data transfers) needs sufficiently flexible protections to address emerging technologies and scientific evidence while serving the common good by balancing the demands of stakeholders and vested interests.**

**The ubiquitous information and communication technologies (ICT) of today's pervasive digital services, platforms, and marketplaces require a global governance perspective to address their societal and economic impacts:**

- **Harmonize laws and regulations across jurisdictions to protect individuals and assure trustworthy flow of information across all boundaries— government, organizations, industry sectors, states, and countries.**
- **Aim to develop flexible regulatory structures that can quickly adapt to social and scientific realities and technical and economic policy challenges.**
- **Use forward-looking, collaborative mechanisms such as experimentation and learning, test-and-evolve, and post-hoc effectiveness reviews. Incentivize specific outcomes that facilitate anticipating and adapting to rapid changes.**

**State laws which become inconsistent with future comprehensive federal privacy standards may be preempted, while more stringent laws may remain.**

**At a minimum, citizens' information protection rights should be comparable to those of citizens around the world—both current and future protections that may be established. Current European Council personal information protections include the ability to:**

- be informed of what personal information is held and why
- access information held by an entity
- request updating or correcting of information
- request manual processing in lieu of automated or algorithmic processing
- request transfer of information to another entity
- withdraw prior consent to process data or object to specific situation consent
- request deleting personal information.

### **C. Personal Information Protection**

**Uniform privacy rights need to protect personal privacy and prevent known harms.**

- Establish uniform information protections for personal and behavioral data that can be linked to an individual or devices.
- Prevent harmful uses of personal information by all information processors who collect, store, analyze, transfer, sell, etc.
- Expand the legal definition of “harm” to include physical, monetary, reputational, intangible, future, or other substantial injuries and to provide individuals the right to legal remedy.
- Assure that personal information collection, use, transfer and disclosure for economic or societal purposes is consistent with the purpose for which individuals provide their data, and does not cause them harm.
- Shift the focus of information protection from individual self-management when submitting data (e.g., opt-in, obscure notice, and choice disclosures) to organizational stewardship in protecting individuals' personal privacy.
- Expand personal information privacy definition to address rapidly changing information and communication technologies, accelerated networking between businesses, and automated collection and dissemination of data, which together subvert personally identifiable information, de-identification, re-identification, and data anonymization.

**D. Electronic Business and Social Media: Cybersecurity Responsibilities Organizations conducting electronic business and social media commercializing personal information both bear the responsibility for protecting information and must be liable for failure to protect individuals from harm.**

### **All organizations -- including third-party receivers:**

- **Must protect individuals' transferred information across multiple organizations to ensure end use accountability.**
- **Have a duty to safely collect, use, and share personal, sensitive information.**
- **Should use comprehensive information risk assessments, take proactive measures to implement information security measures, and be held accountable for fulfilling these risk management obligations.**
- **Are held accountable for misuse of personal information by strengthening both state and federal laws, rule-making, and enforcement powers.**

**We support the right of free speech for all. The digital tools of information and communication technology (such as algorithms and artificial intelligence) can selectively distort or amplify user generated content. The resulting disinformation, digital manipulation, false claims, and/or privacy violations may endanger society or harm others.**

- **Compel private internet communication platforms (applications, social media, websites, etc.) to be responsible for moderating content.**
- **Define liability for damages and provide for enforcement for failure to moderate content.**

## **Annual Sessions**

1975

During the legislative session, the League operated in "hold" position and testified in support of annual legislative sessions.

1980

League members agreed that the constitution should no longer prohibit annual sessions. Members remain undecided whether annual sessions are necessary or desirable.

1997

The League reviewed several proposals relating to annual sessions in various formats. None were voted out.

1999

Several measures were introduced proposing annual sessions with a changed calendar, shorter sessions, and limits on subject matter. Hearings were held, but neither the House nor Senate passed a proposal.

2001

There was a flurry of activity about annual sessions early on during a review of governance issues by the Senate Rules committee, but no action was taken. Some of the stumbling blocks related to when the sessions would begin and end and if there should be subject limitations. With the bleak fiscal outlook for Oregon, it is expected that there will be emergency sessions of the Legislature, perhaps in 2001 and certainly early in 2002.

2003

Annual sessions were discussed as a result of the six special sessions during 2002-03, but no final action was taken on a bill to add a 45-day session in the even-numbered years while limiting the odd-numbered years to 120 days. The League testified in favor.

2005

The League supported a bill for annual sessions, but it did not go anywhere.

2007

The Legislature voted for a February 2008 Special Session as a pilot for possible consideration of a constitutional amendment providing for annual sessions. The League supported this action and will actively follow the work of the special session. If deemed successful, the Legislature is expected to refer the amendment to voters for either the May or November 2008 elections. The League would support such an amendment. Public Commission on the Oregon Legislature (PCOL) recommended consideration of annual sessions and supported a short session for 2008.

2008-9

During the interim between sessions, the Government Accountability Committee had a hearing (summer 2008) on a proposed measure that called for a Constitutional Convention to revise the Oregon Constitution. The League monitored the hearing and was prepared to testify against the bill because of how the delegates to the convention would be chosen and the wide-open ability of the group to change the entire Constitution. There was an informational hearing, but the bill did not move.

2010:

The Special Session of the 2009 Legislature referred a constitutional amendment for annual sessions to voters at the November 2, 2010 General Election. The proposal calls for a 160-day session in the odd numbered years, and a 35-day session in the even numbered years. The sessions will start in February each year.

The League has supported annual sessions for decades, and the two recent special sessions have underlined the need to meet more frequently. The measure passed.

2012

The Legislature sent two constitutional amendments to the voters for the November 2012 General Election. **HJR 7** changes constitutional language referring to the system of separation of powers from “departments” to “branches”. For example, the Executive department becomes the Executive Branch.

Other spelling and grammatical changes also are made. **HJR 44** gives the Governor the authority to declare “catastrophic disasters”, with clear definitions of what is included. Such action would require a legislative session. Other legislative actions are authorized with regard to specified constitutional spending restrictions to aid response and recovery.

The League supported two Constitutional amendments referred by the 2011 Legislature, which were adopted in the November 2012 General Election. The first changes the Constitutional language referring to the system of separation of powers from “departments” to “branches”. Thus the new titles are Executive Branch, Legislative Branch and Judicial Branch. The second grants authority to the Governor to declare “catastrophic disasters” with clear definitions of what is included. Such action would require a Special Session of the Legislature with authority over spending restrictions in providing response and recovery.

## National Position

1975

The League testified in support of revisions of the emergency clause restrictions on tax measures and on behalf of constitutional revision. The Legislature introduced a joint resolution that cleaned up misspellings, archaic provisions, reorganized and cut the document by approximately 10,000 words. It passed the House but failed in the Senate.

1999

Although opposed to term limits in general, the League supported an effort to allow legislators to use all 12 years of eligibility rather than the limits of three House terms and two Senate terms within a 12-year period.

Such an addition would have added continuity and institutional memory to a representative body that has little governing experience as term limits continue. It passed the Senate but was defeated in the House.

The League along with other groups opposed **SJR 10**, which would have required legislative review of all state agency rules. The resolution died in the Senate Rules Committee.

Originally passed by a Constitutional initiative in 1992, term limits have had little discussion in the Legislature until this year. A Constitutional amendment was proposed to allow legislators to serve the full 12 years allowed under the law rather than being restricted to three House or two Senate terms. The League supported this proposal in the interests of continuity for legislators and the enactment of sound public policy. Although it was favorably received, the Legislature instead passed legislation which would allow term-limited former legislators the ability to sue the Secretary of State when filing for re-election would be denied. The Marion County District Court ruled that the term limits law was unconstitutional on technical grounds (more than one subject), and the issue is before the Oregon Supreme Court. The League strongly opposes term limits, and very likely would oppose any effort by the national Term Limits USA organization to put it back on the ballot via the initiative.

#### 2001-03

The League joined the Oregonians for Voters' Rights coalition that was formed to oppose a November 2002 initiative petition that would have reinstated term limits. The proposed initiative did not receive enough signatures to make it to the ballot. The coalition continues to oppose proposed term limits legislation.

#### 2003-04

Term limits were not part of any legislative discussion, but two initiatives are being actively circulated to restore the constitutional restrictions on legislators' time of service. One would restore the 12-year lifetime service limit with two terms in the Senate and three terms in the House. The other, more restrictive, would put the limits in effect immediately, if the measure passed, so that persons running for office in November 2004 would be prohibited from taking office in January if they had exceeded their House or Senate limits. The League opposes term limits and will be active in the campaign against the initiatives if they are on the ballot.

2016

The Legislature established a new Legislative Permanent Research Committee, **SB 1569A**, by large majorities in each chamber and clearly bipartisan. Ways and Means approved the appointment of a director and up to 11 staff members. The committee membership will be selected by the House Speaker and Senate President and consist of equal members from the majority and minority political party members. The purpose is to provide legislators with the ability to set long term state goals and regular legislative review through non-partisan, independent research reports.

## Individual Liberties

### National Position

1988

The League opposed Ballot Measure 8, which would have revoked the governor's authority to ban discrimination based on sexual orientation in state executive department employment and services. Oregon Supreme Court subsequently ruled the measure invalid.

We opposed Ballot Measure 9 which would have allowed discrimination based on sexual orientation. It was defeated.

The League supported the bills introduced by the Labor Commissioner to define sexual orientation and to give protection in the areas of housing, public accommodation and real estate against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Sexual orientation was defined to include bisexual, homosexual and heterosexual. The Senate passed one bill, but the House declined to pass it, substituting another measure which voids all measures passed locally which are perceived to act against or for any special group. The new law is confusing, and lawsuits are being brought by both proponents and opponents of what the League feels are discriminatory ordinances. The League continues to oppose actively all local measures that deny individual rights.

1995

For a while, it appeared the proposal to eliminate discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations based on sexual orientation was going to make it through the Legislature. It passed the Senate, but never made it out of the House committee. Meanwhile, many local ordinance cases are moving through the courts.

The Oregon Citizen's Alliance (OCA) is passing petitions for another statewide initiative promoting discrimination. Our initial stance is to encourage people not to sign.

1997

It was impossible to move any bills to eliminate discrimination even after the House passed a measure to safeguard the workplace. The action took place on the topic of presenting the decrease of rights of workers such as payroll deductions and on a referral back of the 1996 minimum wage measure. The League worked in coalitions to protect individual rights.

1999

There was a strong movement to put a definition of marriage into the Oregon Constitution, which passed the House but was defeated in the Senate. An effort was made to overturn the results of the Tanner decision, which provided for workplace insurance benefits to unmarried partners. It also was defeated in the Senate. No measures about restricting rights based on sexual orientation were considered by the Legislature but several have been submitted as initiatives for 2000. A bill which would have allowed pharmacists to deny prescriptions on moral or religious grounds died in the House Rules Committee after extensive hearings in two other committees and defeat by the House. The hotly debated measure to downsize the effects of the minimum wage law passed by voters in 1996 was passed, but vetoed by the governor. The League opposed this legislation.

Ballot Measure 9 would have prohibited public instruction on homosexuality and bisexuality. The League worked in coalition with other groups to successfully defeat the measure.

The two anti-discrimination bills regarding sexual orientation died in the House and Senate Judiciary committees. One would have prohibited discrimination in public schools and the other in the workplace.

2001

The League supported the ballot measure in November 2002 to remove all historical racial references from obsolete sections of the Oregon constitution. The measure passed 867,901 – 352,027.

2002-03

The League supported the 2002 initiative measure to increase the state's minimum wage and index future increases to the annual U.S. CPI (passed). The League opposed the 2003 legislative proposal to remove the indexing provision from the newly passed statute. The bill died in committee.

The League opposed the Terrorism proposal which could have criminalized groups or individuals meeting to discuss political policies or social programs, and which also would have repealed the provisions in Oregon Revised Statutes Chapter 181 which protect against harassment and intrusion by law enforcement agencies without due process or just cause. The bill died in committee.

The League monitored the measure to require all libraries to install filtering devices to screen out certain topics for minors. We supported the Oregon Library Association's vigorous opposition to such legislation (it also was technically impossible), and the bill died in committee.

2005

The League supported a civil unions proposal (**SB 1000**), which also included a ban on workplace, public accommodation, and housing discrimination based on sexual orientation. But it failed to pass the House when the House Republican leadership sent it back to committee, substituted language to recognize contracts of reciprocal benefit, and then changed the House rules to ensure that it could not be brought back to the House floor. The House members were not given an opportunity to discuss or vote on the legislation. The League will continue its support for civil rights and participate in efforts to bring the issue to the public.

2007

The League supported two major proposals related to sexual orientation that were passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor. Following defeat of civil unions in the 2005 session, this session considered domestic partnerships that provide for a license and declaration by same-sex couples and make provisions for health care, parenting, property rights and other legal responsibilities as accorded to married couples. The second law is a ban on discrimination on the basis of sexual preference of any type in employment, housing, public accommodation and education. Two referendum petitions, which would have barred the implementation of these laws until January 1, 2008, were filed but did not have enough signatures to put them on the ballot. Two initiatives are also being circulated to overturn the new statutes. If the initiative petitions are validated, then the vote will take place in November 2008.

2025

[SB 1098](#), the Freedom to Read bill, was signed into law by the Governor and took effect immediately. LWVOR provided [testimony](#) in support, and League members advocated for it during Lobby Day. A book cannot be banned simply because it contains a story about or by individuals in protected classes.

# Judicial Provisions

2003

The League opposed a legislative amendment to the state Constitution that would require Senate confirmation of the person appointed by the Governor to fill a vacancy in the office of judge of the Supreme Court, Court of Appeals or circuit court. This would upset the constitutional balance of power between the legislative and judicial branches. Such a vacancy only lasts until the next general election. The voters elect judges at that time.

2019

The League has followed the budgets for the **Oregon Judicial Department** since 2007, when the Oregon Judicial Study was published. This session the focus was on the technology system and fees for the use of electronic filings. The Chief Justice requested additional judges and salary increases, which are slowly granted but leaves many courts with demands on judicial time. Courthouse repairs and replacements are scheduled with the most recent expenditures on the State Courts Building in Salem and the new Multnomah County Courthouse in downtown Portland. The League supported sufficient funding for judges and staff in state and district courts in **SB 5515**. The League also supported the budget **for the Public Defense Services Commission** in **SB 5532**, but a request for salary increases proved to be minimal. The PDSC system has been studied and found to be stressed with caseloads that are too high in numbers and too low in payments or salaries. The next session will be expected to conduct another review.

# Local Government

1997

The League used its local government home rule positions to oppose intervention by the Legislature in issues relating to city-passed initiatives and in matters under discussion by local government and private business.

1999

Attacks on the ability of local governments to pass and implement specific legislation came in the form of several bills banning actions voted by local citizens. There also was a bill to lessen or not pay for services mandated by the state to be provided by local governments. It did not survive. The League opposed all of these attempts to interfere with home rule.

2016

The League opposed **SB 1573** that invalidates cities' home rule charters that require voter annexation. The League will participate as an amicus in a lawsuit to defend cities' home rule charters on this issue as will LWV Corvallis.

2017

The League supported **SB 114** and **SB 258** that would have repealed **SB 1573** (2016) above. The bills both died in committee. We are still participating in the lawsuit above that has not been resolved.

## Post Audit

1980

The League agreed that although the Secretary of State is technically a part of the executive branch, since the secretary is elected, there are safeguards for an independent audit.

## State Government

2005

Lieutenant Governor. An interesting bill (**HB 2348**) that the League monitored would have amended the Constitution to establish an office of Lieutenant Governor, not as the second highest official in the state, but as the Director of the Department of Economic Development. The Lieutenant Governor was not required to be of the same political party as the Governor, but would succeed to the office if the Governor could no longer serve. Several hearings were held, fiscal questions were raised, and the bill died in the House Budget committee.

2007

Bills calling for a Lieutenant Governor who would head the state's international trade office and for a non-partisan Legislature were introduced, but no committee action was taken.

# Ethics

2005

The League has been concerned with the funding and procedures of the Oregon Government Standards and Practices Commission for several sessions. The Commission has not been funded at an appropriate level to carry out its investigations of state and local government practices for several biennia. In 2003, we worked to have the governor veto a measure that would have greatly expanded the influence of lobbyists. After many hearings and behind the scenes meetings, the 2005 Legislature handed the problem to the Oregon Law Commission with the charge to examine the structure, funding and procedures of the GSPC and to make recommendations to the 2007 session. Sixty thousand dollars was allocated for the work. The League will be monitoring the work of the Law Commission.

2007

Legislative leadership supported major ethics reform proposals after the disclosure of several ethics violations and various lobbying activities, as well as the report and recommendations of the Oregon Law Commission and two of its workgroups mandated by the 2005 Legislature. The League monitored the work of the Oregon Law Commission and worked vigorously during the session for the passage of a comprehensive ethics reform package. Public Commission on the Oregon Legislature (PCOL) also strongly recommended several of the ethics changes that were enacted.

Included in this legislation:

- The Government Standards and Practices Commission was renamed the Oregon Government Ethics Commission, as it had been originally.
- The General Fund budget was increased and other revenue sources added to the Commission to provide additional training for state and local public officials, additional complaint investigators, and planning for a web-based system for electronic filing of lobbying and ethics reports by 2010.
- Lobbyists and their employers and legislators must now file additional and more regular reports to provide more transparency regarding influence.
- Revisions were made to clarify and simplify the Economic Interest Statements (EIS Reports), which most public officials must file annually.
- Retired legislators must wait until after the next legislative session after completing their term of office before becoming a paid lobbyist.
- Lower limits on gifts (\$50 from \$100) to legislators are expected to be challenged under Oregon's free speech clause in the Constitution.

2009

There were extensive changes to Oregon's ethics laws and procedures in 2007. As might be expected, some readjustments needed to be made in 2009. The Ethics Commission, in sending out the annual Economic Interest Statements (EIS), cast too broad a net causing many small cities and counties to experience wide-spread resignations from local planning commissions, small special district boards and even city councils. Too much financial and personal information was required from both immediate family members of these public officials as well as more distant relatives. Clarifications were made to the statutory language concerning public officials via **SB 30**, along with reiteration of more stringent lobbying practices. The bill grew from 3 pages to 30 by the time it passed.

There was much discussion and controversy over the limits on lobbyists to provide meals and other gifts to legislators. A lawsuit has been filed declaring the 2007 limits an impediment to free speech, but the stricter limits were not overturned by the Legislature this session.

2011

Continuing the review of the extensive ethics reforms made in 2007 and 2009, the Legislature revised the provision related to the filing of statements of economic interests (EIS). Too many lesser local public officials were inadvertently required to file the report. The League supported this revision.

2013

There was continued discussion about the filing by public officials of the annual statements of financial interest and who among family members must also file. When the Ethics Commission was reorganized in 2009, filing was required from several thousand elected and appointed local government officers and many of their family members, causing extreme consternation and even resignations. The 2011 session made some changes, and the League supported further clarification revisions in 2013, noting the unnecessary intrusion into private individual's lives.

As usual, there were several important measures in the area of elections and voter registration, and the results were mixed. The League supported the following:

- The change in title for the "long-term absent elector" to the new federal class of "military or overseas elector" was passed.

- The ability of 16-year-old citizens to register to vote and be placed in their county's preregistered file until they reach 18 was passed by the House, but rejected in the Senate.
- The modernization of voter registration by an electronic form through the DMV (Department of Motor Vehicles) of newly licensed drivers also passed the House but lost in the Senate. Upon receipt of the DMV form with the necessary information for valid registration, the Secretary of State's office would have notified the person of their registration by a prepaid return postcard with the options of declining the registration or choosing a political party. In the future, other state agencies that collect the necessary registration information could also issue the form. There is the possibility that this proposal will be introduced in the 2014 session.
- The proposal to require the state and all county elections offices to print ballots and all election-related materials in other than English, depending on certain percentages of minority populations in counties was revised because of perceived costs and clearer goals. Instead the Legislature adopted the appointment of a multi-demographic Task Force on Minority Language Voting Materials to consider the costs, distribution and other issues involved in the proposal and to report back to the Legislature by October 1, 2014.
- The prevention of perceived voter fraud was addressed by the proposal for ballot security that passed both chambers. It called for video scanning in all areas of every county elections office, as well as providing a detailed process and time lines for destroying spoiled and unused ballots of all types.

The major governance legislation sponsored by the League was the National Popular Vote (NPV) proposal. Oregon was one of the states that the NPV Board targeted for passage, and national resources were given to assist in the effort. The interstate compact, which would enable every vote cast for the election of a U.S. President to be counted equally, has now been endorsed by 11 states, accounting for more than half of the Electoral College votes necessary for the presidential election. The Oregon House passed the bill 38-21 with bi-partisan support. However, the Senate Rules committee refused to hold a hearing, primarily because the Senate President opposed the legislation. Consequently, the opportunity to help move away from having battleground states, to remove the lack of attention to voters in more than 40 states by presidential candidates, and to make presidential elections relevant in Oregon was lost. Both California and Washington have passed the compact.

2015

**HB 2019** enacts important changes to the Oregon Government Ethics Commission supported by the League. (1) The number of members increases from seven to nine, with all being appointed by the Governor. Eight members will come from legislative leaders' recommendations, and one independently. There can be no more than three from each major political party, down from four. (2) Additions to the list of state officials who must file annual statements of economic interest include the spouse/partner of the Governor and the Deputy Secretary of State. (3) Changes are made to the Commission's process for reviewing complaints, greater oversight by the Executive Director, and recommendations for quicker action on complaints as they move through the several stages of consideration. (4) \$200,000 was allocated to expedite the commission's work by providing an electronic case management system.

**HB 2020** is the combination of four proposals regarding the definition and status of Oregon Public Officials. It arose from the resignation of former Governor Kitzhaber and the accompanying charges involving the Governor's "partner" and various staff members and consultants. The Governor's spouse or partner shall now be called First Partner and designated as a Public Official, subject to any and all regulations and policies concerning such persons. The bill also mandates that the Deputy Secretary of State and the First Partner file an annual Statement of Economic Interest with the Ethics Commission. Oregon's Public Officials now are the Governor, First Partner, Secretary of State, State Treasurer, Attorney General, and the Commissioner of the Bureau of Labor and Industry. No Public Officials, legal counsels or advisors on the Governor's staff may accept honorariums, money etc. for speeches and presentations. There is a fine of \$10,000 for violations

2016

**HB 3134A**, easily passing both chambers, requires legislative lobbyists to report changes in clients within five days. The reports are mandated to the Oregon Government Ethics Commission with regard to changes in both new or dropped clients.

2017

Four bills relating to lobbying and the Oregon Government Ethics Commission did not pass. We did discuss concerns with sponsors and did not support the bills. The existing ORS 171.740 aggregate reporting thresholds of \$100 lobbyist spending or 24 hours cumulative, direct lobbying in the building, in any calendar quarter held.

In good faith, League Action Coordinators agreed we should all register and submit the requisite quarterly reports, easily filed online since the League has no funding involved. We anticipate further legislative proposals. **SB 43** would expand lobbyist registration exemptions. **HB 2577** would require reporting for each bill, measure, legislative topic, or amendment lobbied, identity of supporters and funds transacted. **HB 2870** would remove lobbyist reporting sunsets. **HB 3072** would prohibit certain state officials from receiving lobbying funds within a year of leaving office.

## Economic Development Revenue Bonds

Adopted April 1983

**A. The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports the authority to issue Economic Development Revenue Bonds by the state, ports, and cities with more than 300,000 population.**

- 1. In issuing Economic Development Revenue Bonds, top priority should be given to those projects which diversify the economy and/or create jobs. However, consideration should also be given to assisting economically depressed areas and attracting industries to locate in Oregon.**
- 2. Possible unfair competition which might result from bond issuance should be examined at the local level.**

**E. In addition to the Economic Development Revenue Bond program, the League of Women Voters of Oregon supports other state and local economic stimulants such as upgrading education at all levels and exploring various types of financing methods.**

## Position Implementation - Economic Development Revenue Bonds

Since the position was adopted in 1983, few opportunities for action on the state level have arisen. In 1989 the League testified against issuing bonds for purchase of trucks by an Indiana company under contract with Portland Metro to transport solid waste from Portland to Arlington via the Columbia Gorge.

## Election Laws

Adopted 1987; Revised 1997

**The League of Women Voters of Oregon recognizes that election procedures and voter information are critical elements to an informed and participating electorate.**

**A. Registration Process.** The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes a variety of practices is necessary to provide the public with adequate information regarding where and how to register, under what circumstances and how to re-register, notice of election dates, and content of the ballot. The League supports:

1. A registration process which is accessible, well publicized and easily understood, as well as easy to implement and administer;
2. Mail-in registration forms which are widely available;
3. Oregon implementation of the National Voter Registration Act which includes registration process training for agency personnel and the designation of additional registration sites;
4. Implementing a statewide centralized registration list;
5. A registration cut-off requirement that does not disenfranchise otherwise qualified voters.

**F. Elections Process.** The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes elections should be conducted in a manner which encourages voter participation and supports:

1. No more than four annual, regularly scheduled, election dates;
2. A formula for cost-sharing between the state and the counties for the state portion of the primary and general elections;
3. Evaluating the timing of the Oregon Primary; and
4. Expediting the process for filling vacancies in federal offices.

**G. Voting Process.** The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes citizens are entitled to voting procedures which provide ease of ballot access and use and supports:

1. Use of vote-by-mail in all elections. Every effort should be made to preserve ballot secrecy to prevent fraud.
2. Use of the permanent absentee ballot, provided methods and timelines for counting such ballots are improved, unless and until vote-by-mail in all elections is implemented; and
3. Shortening the time between sending out mail ballots and their required return date.

**H. Voter Education Process.** The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports publication and distribution of a state Voters' Pamphlet prior to statewide elections and believes that:

1. The state has an obligation to provide voters with accurate information so that voters can make reasoned choices;

2. All ballot measures must be included with official explanatory statements, an official advisory opinion on constitutionality, effects of a "yes" and "no" vote, a fiscal impact statement, and summaries of the main arguments for and against the measures;
  3. The number of arguments for and against the measures to be included should be limited;
  4. The fees charged per page should more clearly reflect the actual costs; and
  5. Ballot titles and measures need to be stated in clear, concise language and should avoid confusing negatives.
- I. The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports a mandatory certification procedure for all county chief elections officials.

## Position Implementation - Election Laws

1987

Vote-by-mail was initiated by the Legislature in 1981 as a pilot project. It was reviewed during each legislative session and was due to sunset August 1987. League opposed making vote-by-mail permanent until questions of uniformity and secrecy of ballots were answered.

Despite League lobbying, the Legislature made vote-by-mail a permanent option and all county clerks are to be certified to conduct vote-by-mail elections by 1989. Questions of uniformity of the voting process and secrecy were not resolved. The 20-day voters' registration cut off went into effect November 1986 after voters approved it at the polls. Amendments were made in 1987 so that certificates of registration can be obtained by previously registered voters to allow them to vote in an election if they fail to reregister during the 20-day cut off. The League opposed the 1986 measure and the 1987 amendments because they disenfranchise voters and do not treat all voters equally. Polling hours were changed in 1987 to 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

1991

The League supported removal of the Motor Voter implementation date which was to coincide with enactment of a federal Motor Voter act, and to allow the Oregon statute to be implemented in 1991. The original legislation was passed in 1989. The 1991 measure passed, and it is now possible for Oregonians to register when they apply for a new or renewed driver's license. A bill to reduce the voter registration cut off from 20 days to five days prior to an election did not pass.

1993

The League was very active during the 1993 legislative session in the areas of election law, campaign finance reform, individual rights (LWVUS positions), and public records law revision. Lobbying was done through testimony, letters and personal legislator contacts. The Oregon implementation of the 1993 National Voter Registration Act was passed which includes registration cards at federal and state agency offices along with "motor voter" and registration-by-mail, already in operation in this state.

Action to lessen the 20-day registration cut off was not successful. The League had two bills introduced - one to require statewide and legislative candidates to answer three issue-related questions in the *Voters' Pamphlet* and the other to allow establishment of local Voter Education Committees. Both were included in legislation passed by the Senate, but they died in the House. League supported revisions to the *Voters' Pamphlet* presented by the Secretary of State, including restrictions on the number of issue pro and con arguments, but the House rejected them.

1995

LWVOR was not able to address many of the election law proposals although we monitored the hearings and discussed them with the Secretary of State and Director of Elections. The Legislature passed a mail ballot statute for primary and general elections, which was vetoed by the governor. Enacted and signed is a new law for the Presidential primary election, which will be held on the second Tuesday in March of Presidential election years. Efforts again were initiated to improve the *Voters' Pamphlet* by limiting arguments pro and con for ballot measures, but they were not passed. Changes were made in ballot measure information which will include limited statements on the effects of yes and no votes and an 85-word summary of the measure, but no explanation will be included.

1997

LWVOR used its new election laws position to lobby extensively for the vote-by-mail extension to the primary and general elections. Several bills were introduced, but it took a press conference, a private meeting with the House Rules and Elections Committee Chair, and a letter signed by all six members of the committee to get a hearing three months into the 1997 legislative session. We worked in a coalition with several organizations including AARP, AAUW, Common Cause, OPEU, Association of Oregon Counties, Women's Rights Coalition, and the Oregon Student Association as well as with the Secretary of State and the Oregon Association of County Elections Officials.

The House passed a vote-by-mail bill, which would refer the issue to a vote in the 1998 general election, but the Senate President and the Chair of the Senate Rules and Elections Committee refused to allow a hearing. There appeared to be strong support among Senators to pass vote-by-mail; however, the House bill died for lack of Senate approval.

LWVOR, the Associations of County Elections Officials and the chair of the Vote by Mail Commission are the chief petitioners on a vote-by-mail initiative petition that calls for an extension to the primary and general elections, using the language of **HB 3086**. League members and volunteer signature gatherers from several other organizations are passing petitions to place the issue on the 1998 general election ballot. With the increase in permanent absentee ballot holders, there is obviously extensive support for vote-by-mail.

The League supported a proposal for a feasibility study to plan for a state centralized voter registration list that would also provide the technology for all counties to be in contact with each other regarding election issues. We will continue to work for such a list and will be involved with drafting legislation during the interim to have funding for implementation in 1999.

League members were strong in their support for changes in the *Voters' Pamphlet* which would decrease the numbers of measure pro and con arguments and lessen the cost of the publication. The Senate heard arguments, but changed the bill to provide for larger page fees rather than dealing with the real issues. It did not pass the House. The League expects to be involved with revisions prepared during the interim for the 1999 session. Even the Secretary of State's election housekeeping bills did not pass at the end of the session, let alone any election law reforms. Of the 80 plus bills dealing with the elections processes in some way, none were approved and most did not even receive courtesy hearings.

## 1999

The League supported the House Speaker's effort to pass a measure establishing a centralized state voter registration list. The bill also included several mandates to county elections officials regarding implementation of vote-by-mail. Only the latter survived Ways and Means. Both Houses passed the bill, but it carried a \$10 million price tag for implementing the system and that section was not funded.

Clarification and refinement of elections operational procedures was passed, and the Presidential primary was moved from March back to May.

None of the proposed changes to improve the *Voters' Pamphlet*, such as limiting ballot measure articles, received a hearing.

2001

The League-supported a measure to establish a centralized statewide voter registration list passed the Legislature and was allotted \$2 million to develop the system plan by 2003. Unfortunately, the economic downturn caused the Emergency Board to remove the funding which puts the needed elections reform on hold. In other action, the Legislature passed measures that require labeling of official ballot drop boxes around cities and counties, but it failed to pass the critical change requiring that punch card ballots be replaced by other voting technology. Since 40 percent of the registered voters are in punch card counties, the undercount registered by these ballots remains a significant problem. Large counties such as Lane, Washington and Clackamas lack the fiscal resources to make the necessary changes on their own.

Three bills that we opposed - moving the closing of elections to 6 p.m., counting ballots postmarked on Election Day, and voting on initiatives in May - were not passed.

The League received a place on the 12-person Oregon Steering Committee for the federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA) which has developed the state HAVA Plan and is overseeing its implementation.

During the session the League supported the bill to establish the necessary Elections Fund in the Secretary of State's office to receive and disburse the expected \$22 million in federal funds for reform of the elections system under HAVA. It was passed at the last possible moment, and the early funds are being used to eliminate punch card ballots, establish the required centralized voter registration system, and to begin system revisions to bring greater access to voting to minority populations and the disabled. The HAVA Steering committee is continuing, and League members will be trained to assist county elections offices in providing access to the disabled. We also will be seeking to use HAVA money in future voter education projects. The League also supported a measure from the Secretary of State's office to exempt the personal information required of first-time voter registrants from the public records law. This information includes birth certificates, passports, naturalization papers, etc. The bill passed.

2003

The Voters' Pamphlet, 100 years old and considered a major voter education tool, went unfunded by the Legislature despite session-long support from the League, Common Cause, MiPRAP and other groups. It died at the Speaker's desk upon adjournment. The major issue was increased fees for candidates and measure campaigns to offset the lack of General Fund dollars which were lost with the defeat of Measure 28.

The League submitted written testimony to the Emergency Board in support of funding for the Voters' Pamphlet for the 2004 election cycle. A Primary Election Voters' Pamphlet was funded, but no money has been allocated yet for the November 2004 General Election. The League will provide support at the July 2004 E-Board meeting to fund the General Election pamphlet, costing about \$800,000. A suggested alternative, to provide the pamphlet on the Internet and print copies for those without access, is not feasible.

None of the "housekeeping" election bills, some each session to correct or revise election system procedures, reached the House floor, because the Rules Chair did not hold hearings, inserted them into an omnibus bill the night before adjournment, and they died at the Speaker's desk.

2005

As usual, the House Rules committee, which oversees all election issues, was an enigma. It started with a flourish with plans for holding hearings around the state and seeking input from various groups and individuals. The League pointed out our concerns about HAVA implementation (centralized registration data base, voting machines for disabled), election "housekeeping" items to keep the system current, funding for the Voters Pamphlet and campaign finance reform, and recommended timely agendas for the public hearings so citizens could respond. Then several weeks went by with no committee meetings.

In the meantime, it became apparent that a group of citizens with strong opposition to vote by mail and voter registration drives had the ear of the chair. We spent as much time on election damage control and protection of citizen's rights to registration access as we did supporting necessary legislation. In the end, measures that would have required excessive registration identification, prevented county elections officials from opening ballots until 8:30 a.m. on Election Day, and almost eliminate ballot drop boxes were not passed.

The committee did hold hearings out of the Capitol, but continued to hear the same bills over and over without airing other important election issues and allowed repetitious arguments about the fraud in Oregon's voter registration and vote -by- mail. There is no credible evidence of such fraud.

2005

In an omnibus elections bill, the Legislature included needed updates of election procedures, a new definition of voting machines, which includes requiring a paper trail and fulfills the disabled voter requirement for HAVA, and continued the implementation of HAVA so that Oregon would be in compliance with the federal law by January 1, 2006 as required. The centralized voter registration system is an integral part of that law and will greatly improve county and state election communications and avoid fraud. Unfortunately, the funding for the Voters Pamphlet was not included in the Secretary of State's budget directly. Only a million dollars was allocated to the Emergency Board, and the Secretary of State must request funding for the Primary pamphlet in December. As we did in 2004, the League supported the request. There is not enough funding for the General Election pamphlet so another request will be made in June, 2006. In 2004, the E-Board only gave enough money in June to publish the VP, and the Secretary had to go back in September to get the money for distribution costs.

A proposal by the Secretary of State to provide alternatives to elections if a disaster occurred during an election period drew heated debate concerning irregularities, power, and fraud. The League supported an amendment that provided for joint agreement between the Governor and the Secretary, but the bill didn't make it out of committee.

With funding from the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), alternative disability ballots by phone were tested and progress made in designing other Alternative Ballot Forms. HAVA also assisted in providing funds for the League's large print, easy-to-read, and Spanish language Voters Guides.

2007

For the first time in several sessions, meaningful revisions to Oregon's elections laws were enacted. One was referred to the 2008 November General Election - the controversial requirement that any property tax measure must receive not only a majority of the votes cast, but that more than 50 percent of the registered voters must participate in the vote at any election except the even numbered year General Election.

The constitutional amendment referral will not repeal the "double majority" rule, but will add additional elections that will not require the 50/50 majority. The League has been supporting this change ever since it was enacted in 1996.

The long-awaited Centralized Voter Registration system is in operation. The Public Commission on the Oregon Legislature (PCOL) discussed various election methods such as fusion voting, instant runoff elections, and open primaries. The Commission supported open primaries. While there was discussion during the session of these issues, no action was taken on the PCOL discussions.

Major actions of the Legislature were:

- The vote-by-mail system is now fully operational with the elimination of all references to polling places, except the one in each county at the elections office.
- 17-year-olds may now register and will be notified by the county when they become eligible to vote.
- In case of a state emergency during an election ballot return period, the Governor and Secretary of State may allow an additional seven days for ballot return.
- Higher Ed institutions must work with student organizations with voter registration, "get out the vote" drives, and voter information,
- The Voters Pamphlet is fully funded for the 2008 election cycle.
- As federal law is soon expected to require, Oregon will have a system for hand counting a percentage of cast ballots after any election for comparison with and validation of the tally system.

2008-9

The constitutional amendment to remove the requirement that property tax proposals must receive both a more than 50% affirmative vote and a 50% voter turnout, referred by the 2007 Legislature, passed. It did not remove the restriction, but does not require the double majority at any May or November elections.

This session passed landmark election laws which the League was able to support. These include:

1. Electronic voter registration which will be implemented in 2010. The League gave strong support for this bill and was invited to the signing by the Governor.
2. Overseas voters, especially the military, will benefit from the ability to fax back their ballots on a secure line to the Secretary of State, starting in 2010.

3. County elections offices may begin to scan, but not count, ballots, seven days before election day. This will particularly help the staff in large population counties. The League worked with the Association of County Clerks in support.
4. Repealing the 2005 legislation prohibiting voters from participating in nominating ballots for more than one party, the new statute allows voters to participate both in the regular Primary in
5. May and nominating conventions for the minor parties in the summer prior to statewide elections.
6. *Voters' Pamphlet* fees were increased to now provide for more than 50% of the funding for the publication. The League has long supported the idea of a self-sustaining *Voters' Pamphlet*, not subject to budget limitations.
7. Addressing a "thorn" in the side of both the Elections Division and candidates, legislation was passed to define and classify the property lines for a candidate's residence.

Significant changes were made to the statutes governing voter registration to allow the implementation of registration by electronic means. The Secretary of State has been given a deadline of March, 2011 to report on the implementation system for local government's use of candidate cross nominations (modified fusion) by 2012.

Clarification was provided for the use of facsimile return of election ballots. This method may be used only by overseas voters, and a waiver of privacy was given because of the need for a written signature. In addition, the Legislature responded to the League's complaint about the use of an imitation ballot just days before the Special Election on taxes in January. The new statute sets strict use of any imitation ballot and provides penalties.

Significant changes were made to improve voting access and to improve the election and registration processes. The League supported these actions as well as opposing some discriminatory and unjustified election fraud proposals. Two measures which were not passed are scheduled for discussion in 2012. They deal with removal of precinct chairpersons from the Primary ballot and lowering the fines and penalties for late contribution and expenditure fiscal reports by candidates.

Long-term absentee voters (overseas) and members of the military may now receive and return ballots electronically. To have the ballot counted, a form agreeing to forgo privacy and containing the registered signature of the voter must be sent by fax or post to the voter's county election office or the Elections Division of the Secretary of State's office.

The time has been extended for filing candidate nominations when an unexpected vacancy on the ballot occurs two weeks ahead of the filing deadline.

A National Voter Registration Compliance Council has been established to access new and developing federal guidelines for achieving compliance with the National Voter registration Act of 1993. It is in the executive branch of government, will have 10 members, and requires an annual report.

There will be an automatic recount of ballots in any election where there is a margin of one-fifth of one percent between candidates. This revision of the current statute clarifies that both partisan and non-partisan elections are included.

2014

**SB 1544** was a priority for the League making key changes to the Citizen Initiative Review Commission. Instead of four former initiative panel moderators and two former panel members required on the oversight Commission, there will be four former panel members and two former moderators, which will provide additional hands-on experience. Further, the initiative panel discussions can take place between three and five days, instead of only five, and the sunset on the life of the Commission was removed.

The Elections Division always has what's known as a "housekeeping bill". The omnibus bill, **SB 1504**, passed the Senate 20-9, and House, 41-17. It had several parts: updating violations that prevent persons from gathering signatures, allowing the name of a candidate seeking two positions to appear more than once on the ballot, allowing electioneering to occur near an elections office outside of business hours, allowing a person to show another person a marked ballot, and allowing a person submitting an unsigned ballot to remain on the active voter list.

**SB 1515** would have established a work group to study the feasibility of electronic voting. While it passed the Senate, 18-11, it stalled in the House Rules committee because of stiff citizen opposition, with some discussion of an informal work group organized by the Secretary of State. Then came fruit basket upset with the contents of **SB 1504** being "stuffed" into **SB 1515B**, eliminating the electronic voting study, and adding an emergency clause. The Senate concurred on the session's last day.

2015

Alongside Oregon's unique Vote by Mail, Oregon now has a new voter registration system known as "new motor voter", also a national first. Passage of **HB 2177**, strongly supported by the League, was introduced on the first day of the 2015 session and passed both chambers in two weeks.

With implementation January 1, 2016, Oregon's voter registration will now be made automatically when citizens receive a new driver's license, renew a license or receive an official ID card. Since the requirements for a vehicle license are the same as for voter registration (date of birth, proof of citizenship, Oregon residency) the ability of the Department of Transportation to electronically send the legally signed license information to the Secretary of State (SOS) enables the automatic registration. The SOS will, by rule, establish the process. A postcard notification to the licensee will indicate their registration, county, and a 22-day opportunity to opt out or indicate a political party or unaffiliated voting preference. The statewide Central Voter Registration list will indicate if the person is already registered.

The League supported **HB 3574/SB 680**, the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact (NPV), which passed the House with bi-partisan support for the third time and had a majority of Senators in support. However, no hearing was held, either on the House bill or the Senate one. Eleven states having 61% of the Electoral College votes necessary to activate the NPV compact, have now passed it. LWVUS has included the NPV as part of the position advocating for repeal of the Electoral College.

The Legislature did not pass the proposed "omnibus election bill" for 2015, to the dismay of the Secretary of State. It will now come before the 2016 short session as it contains some necessary election changes.

2017

**HB 2927** National Popular Vote, passed for the fourth time in the House, but was blocked from committee hearings by the Senate President and majority leader, despite our effort. **SB 229**, an elections omnibus bill with items persisting from three terms of Secretaries of State, passed, with our consultation. It was amended to allow for the 2018 special election relating to ballot measure #101 and **HB 2391**, a health care funding bill, **SB 802**. Voter pre-registration for 16 year-olds passed with our support. **HB 2696** passed with our support, allowing state Voters' Pamphlet coverage of certain community college district measures, if not covered locally. We advocated for optional local candidate filing through ORESTAR, had a sponsor, support from the Secretary of State, County Clerks, and only from larger Special Districts. We anticipate resuming this collaborative effort in the 2019 session.

# Election Methods

Adopted 2009, Revised 2017

**The League of Women Voters of Oregon recognizes that election methods affect how voters participate in our democracy, who can run for office, and who can get elected. Therefore, the League supports election methods that:**

- Encourage voter participation and voter engagement.
- Encourage participation of those with minority opinions to participate.
- Are easy to use.
- Are verifiable and auditable.
- Promote access to voting.
- Promote competitive elections.
- Promote sincere voting over strategic voting.
- Discourage negative campaigning.
- Prevent political manipulation (e.g. Gerrymandering).
- Be compatible with vote-by-mail elections.

**The League of Women Voters of Oregon does not believe that the current plurality voting system of elections is the best method for promoting democratic choice in all circumstances. For single-winner systems, the League supports ranked-choice voting; we do not support range or approval voting.**

**The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports an election system that elects policy-making bodies—legislatures, councils, commissions, and boards—that proportionally reflect the people they represent. We support systems that promote stable government, but we do not support systems that protect the two-party system.**

**The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports enabling legislation to allow local jurisdictions to explore alternative election methods. If an alternative election method is adopted, then funding for startup and voter education should be available.**

**The League of Women Voters of Oregon does not support nonpartisan elections for state legislators.**

Since the position was adopted in 2017, opportunities for action have not arisen.

# Emergency Board

Adopted 1982

**The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports the use of the appointed Emergency Board to provide fiscal adjustment between legislative sessions.**

- A. The League endorses the practice of naming a majority of the members from the current Ways and Means Committee to the Emergency Board. However, balanced statewide representation should be required.**
- J. The public should have the right to be heard by the Emergency Board. Its meetings should be publicized in advance and summary agendas should be readily available to the public.**
- K. The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that powers of the board should be reviewed by the Oregon Legislative Assembly. Areas to be reviewed should include:**
  - 1. The definition of what constitutes an emergency;**
  - 2. The discretionary ability of the board to make policy decisions in a forum where political accountability and public participation are limited.**

Since the position was adopted in 1982, opportunities for action have not arisen.

# Fiscal Policy – Tax System

Adopted 1965-66, 1973; Revised 1971, 1973, 1979, 1984, 1992, 1993, 1999; Educational Update 1999\*

- A. Evaluating Taxes. The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes any tax proposal should be evaluated with regard to its effect on the entire tax structure. The League supports the following criteria for evaluating taxes and tax systems.**
  - 1. A tax system that is based on ability to pay, but that applies a benefits- received principle wherever reasonable and that recognizes the role of social expediency;**
  - 2. A tax system that is equitable, adequate, stable, easy to administer and as simple as possible;**
  - 3. A tax system that takes into account the taxes levied by all levels of government covering the same tax base;**
  - 4. A tax system that is flexible enough to adjust to social and economic changes (e.g., population shifts, development of new industry, demands for more services and changes in business cycles);**

5. A tax system that recognizes the individual's responsibility for government services by providing for broad sharing of the tax burden.

**L. Fiscal Responsibility**

1. The League of Women Voters believes local government should have primary responsibility for financing non-school local government. Local services mandated by the state should have state funding.
2. A tax limitation is justified if it provides safeguards in the regulation of state and local services and economy. A limitation is not desirable if it prevents provision of services, disrupts government functioning, inhibits progress or results in loss of local control.
3. We believe economy should be achieved by efficiency and responsible administration. If cuts are necessary, preference should be given to cuts based on an established priority of services so that least essential services are reduced or eliminated first.

**M. Income Tax.** The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports the income tax as the most equitable means of providing state revenue. The income tax should be progressive, compatible with federal law and should apply to the broadest possible segment of Oregonians.

**N. Sales Tax.** The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports the adoption of a sales tax provided:

1. The rate cannot be increased without approval of the voters;
2. Regressivity is reduced through:
  - a. a tax credit or rebate and
  - b. exemptions for items such as food, rent and utilities.

**O. Property Tax.** The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports the use of the local property tax for partially financing local government and local services.

**Exemptions to the General Property Tax.** The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes:

1. Social values justify:
  - a. exemptions to charitable, educational and benevolent organizations;
  - b. exemptions to fraternal organizations only to the extent of actual charity performed;
  - c. partial exemption of church property with fees to be paid for local government services directly benefiting the property, such as police and fire protection.
2. Exemptions designed to create a favorable climate for attracting new industry should be competitive with those of other states.

3. Economic values justify tax deferral and special assessment at less than real market value on farmlands and forest lands.
4. Eligibility for an exemption should require:
  - a. a verified statement of the taxpayer;
  - b. proof of income from all individuals seeking an exemption on their home- steady if eligibility for the exemption is based on income.
5. Exemption laws should be periodically reexamined to determine whether they are justified.
6. Exemption of some classes of personal property is justified if a tax on them would be too difficult or costly to administer.

**P. School District Financing. The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes:**

1. The major portion of the cost of public schools should be borne by the state.
  - a. The state should provide sufficient funds to give each child an equal, adequate education.
  - b. All specifically state mandated programs should be financed by the state.
7. Local districts should be allowed funding alternatives to provide educational programs.
8. Apart from state mandates, local control of the educational programs should be maintained.
9. A stable state system for financing public schools is crucial for long range planning.

**Q. Emergency Clause. The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports removing the emergency clause restriction on revenue measures. The importance of such measures warrants:**

1. Either more support than a simple majority; or
2. More signatures than currently required on a petition to refer.

\*Updated for background information only – no position change.

## Position History - Fiscal Policy

The League of Women Voters of Oregon has been studying taxes since 1963; during that time our studies included the fiscal policies of the state, the history of the tax system and its present form, the philosophy and criteria of taxation, Oregon's budgetary procedures, property tax exemptions and tax limitations, the state income tax, the sales tax, corporation income and excise taxes, school district financing, the emergency clause restriction, and the property tax system.

Our studies led to the positions listed above on criteria for evaluating taxes and tax systems, on tax limitations, on the kinds of exemptions we believe are justified, on the income tax as the most equitable means of providing state revenue, and in favor of an equitable system of school finance.

2000

After hours of discussion among the members of the K-12 School Finance Update Committee, the Action Committee, and the LWVOR Board, two schools of thought remain on whether the LWVOR position on school district finance can be used by local Leagues to support local option levies.

One group believes that achieving equality of educational opportunity should be League's paramount goal. No League actions should conflict with this goal. They feel the local option levies will move us back to the situation prior to Measure 5 where property-rich school districts provide better educational programs than property-poor districts. They feel that local option levies will reduce the incentives for the Legislature to provide adequate statewide funding. Although supporting local League involvement in their school district(s) policy setting and implementation, this group does not support actions that might lead us away from achieving equitable educational opportunities.

This group is supported by the LWVUS position on equality of opportunity in education. The national position "supports equal access to education." This group is also supported by the first section of the LWVOR school district financing position. The second group agrees that action at the state level should push for "sufficient funds to give each child an equal, adequate education." They feel, however, that the state is not currently providing enough funds for schools to adequately educate their children or even to pay for all state mandated programs. Some also think the equalization formula does not address all the factors that cause costs to be higher in one area than another. With current state funding, local school districts must use other funding alternatives to provide adequate programs. Some communities rely on a combination of volunteers, business contributions, education foundations, or funds from other local governments. Other communities will decide to use the local option property tax as one of their sources of local income. This school of thought feels that there is no one-size-fits-all solution and local Leagues should decide whether a local option property tax is appropriate for their communities. This group is supported by sections 2 and 3 of the school district financing position, which address the local district's role.

Given that there are two valid and strongly-held points-of-view, both of which can be supported by the LWVOR school district financing position, the State Board is not recommending a particular course of action by local Leagues. The State Board requests that local Leagues considering whether to support a local option levy discuss both these points-of-view. They should decide what to do based on what they decide is best for their school district(s), communities and state.

## Position Implementation - Fiscal Policy

1968

We opposed a 1-1/2 percent property tax limitation on the basis of our positions on equitable and adequate financing and against limitations that prevent the provision of services.

1968 & 1969

We opposed a sales tax. During several legislative sessions we testified in opposition to earmarking of funds.

1971-73

A study added a position in opposition to the emergency clause restriction in the Oregon Constitution in its present form and one in favor of using the local property tax as a means of financing local government services, but relying on the state to provide the major part of funding for schools. Until 1973 we had a position opposing a sales tax. At that time, it became apparent that members no longer agreed with this position and it was dropped. However, it was not replaced with a position in support of the sales tax until our 1983-4 reexamination of Oregon's tax system which led members to support a sales tax with the restrictions as stated in the position above. A special provision of the constitution is especially significant in establishing the tax structure in the state. It provides that if a bill does not bear an emergency clause, it cannot take effect until 90 days after the end of the legislative session at which it passed. This is important for taxes because the constitution also provides that no tax bill passed by the Legislature can bear the emergency clause. The 90-day waiting period on tax legislation allows

Oregon citizens, under their initiative and referendum system, to initiate proceedings to secure voter approval at a general election for any major tax bill. This sometimes means a delay of as much as 18 months. Though insuring citizen approval, this provision makes it difficult for the Legislature to react promptly to fluctuating conditions.

1972

In the fall the League joined with other groups in opposing a ballot measure which would have removed the property tax from being used to support public schools but did not provide any alternative source of revenue. The measure failed. On the basis of our new position on school finance, we actively supported the proposal of Governor McCall to remove the property tax from residential property and shift the operating costs to the state. The voters rejected the proposal in a referendum.

1975 & 1977

The Legislature made only minor adjustments in the tax structure of the state but made a major revision in the Basic School Support formula in order to more nearly equalize the amount of revenue available per pupil in various school districts.

1978

Prior to the November election the League joined a coalition opposed to Ballot Measure 6 which would have limited residential property taxes to 1-1/2 percent of the true cash value and severely limited the ability of local governments to finance themselves. The measure failed, but strong opposition to the property tax continued to grow in the state.

1979

The Legislature responded with a major tax relief proposal. The League expressed its support for some elements of the plan but urged the Legislature to retain adequate funds to finance state programs. We urged expanding the Homeowners and Renters' Relief Program (HARRP) as a means of tax relief for those who need it most and raising the Basic School Support Fund (BSSF) as a means of general tax relief. The package the Legislature finally approved increased HARRP payments and funds for BSSF, provided for the state to pay 30 percent of the property tax on each homestead up to a maximum of \$800, and provided for a sizable refund of personal income tax money, which left the state with very little reserve. The League had some reservations about the plan, but felt it much superior to the possible tax limitation proposals. Therefore, we joined a coalition to seek approval of the tax relief package. Voters approved the plan in May 1980.

1980

In the fall another 1-1/2 percent property tax limitation measure was put on the ballot by initiative. Again the League joined with state leaders and other organizations to oppose the measure. It too failed.

1981

The Legislature was faced with declining state revenues and growing demands for property tax relief as the result of the severe recession. Plans for balancing the state budget and providing property tax relief included drastic cuts in funding higher education, human resources, and other state programs. The League urged the Legislature to reexamine all sources of revenue, including the 30 percent Property Tax program, in its effort to solve the problem, which led a Statesman Journal reporter to write, "The Oregon League of Women Voters yesterday decided to speak the unspeakable. The League is the first independent group to take aim at the sacred cow."

There was not enough money to fully fund the 30 percent program. To make up for shrinking revenues the Legislature enacted a number of temporary measures, including the 8 percent surcharge on income tax rates, increases in the cigarette tax, and speeding up withholding of income tax collections. Another property tax limitation measure appeared on the ballot in the fall of 1982. Again the League joined with other groups to oppose it. It too failed, but by a very narrow margin.

1983

The Legislature again grappled with the twin problems of property tax relief and declining state revenue. Many proposals were debated. The one that finally emerged was a proposal for a state sales tax which would be dedicated to property tax relief. An elaborate provision requiring a majority of the state's local governments to approve sending the measure to the voters before it could be voted on was declared unconstitutional and the proposal died. Although the League at that time had no position on the sales tax, we did urge the Legislature to face the problem squarely by providing major tax reform of a lasting nature and suggested that if a sales tax were approved it should contain provisions that would eliminate as much regressivity as possible.

1984 & 1986

More property tax limitation measures appeared on the ballots. League joined with other groups to oppose these measures, and they all failed at the polls.

1985

The sales tax package (**HB 2010**), proposed by the Legislature for a vote of the people, met League criteria and thus enabled League to work vigorously toward passage of the sales tax: (1) because the sales tax included exemptions that prevented regressivity;

(2) because the 5 percent rate would have been specified in the constitution;

(3) because the sales tax would help stabilize school financing while maintaining local control; (4) because the sales tax would have been economical to administer and yet difficult to evade; and (5) because a sales tax provided the "third leg which would balance the tax structure and provide property tax relief." As with every other sales tax ever proposed in Oregon, this one was defeated.

1987

The Legislature considered several proposals to prevent school closures in Oregon by providing some kind of automatic funding for schools if levies failed. What finally emerged from the Legislature was a "safety net" bill that allowed school districts to fall back on the previous year's levy. This legislation was sent to the voters in May and passed. The League supported the measure as a first step in school finance reform even though we had reservations about the inadequate funds it provided some districts. A Blue Ribbon Commission was appointed to study a variety of options to reform our system of financing public schools and report to the 1989 Legislature. In addition to our action in the area of property tax relief, the League has frequently testified in support of legislation requiring periodic reexamination of property tax exemptions and requiring charitable, fraternal and religious organizations to provide funds in lieu of taxes for police and fire protection.

1989

The short-term recommendations of the Governor's Commission on School Funding Reform did not support any specific form of alternative school funding but rather sought to stabilize the existing system by requiring all Oregon school districts to have current tax bases. The Legislature passed a tax base referendum and included in the package other commission recommendations: targeted property tax relief for those in high property tax districts with low per pupil spending, increased state funding for special education (up to 50 percent), and a change in the way basic school support is apportioned to the school districts. The League supported the commission's recommendations and lobbied for passage of the ballot measure. The ballot measure was voted on statewide in the spring and failed. The Legislature also considered repeal or modification of the state spending limitation. The League supported modification of the limit but no legislative action was taken.

1991

In November of 1990 Oregonians passed Measure 5, a property tax rate limitation initiative. The limitation imposed a \$10/1,000 maximum tax rate on all property taxes levied to cities and counties.

Educational property tax rates were limited in 1991 to \$15/\$1,000 of assessed value and will decrease by \$2.50 every year for the next five years until the maximum rate of

\$5/\$1,000 is achieved. The state General Fund will make up the amount lost to schools yearly as a result of this limitation. This obligation sunsets in 1996.

The 1991 Legislature felt that any discussion during the session of revenue replacement packages or tax restructuring plans was premature. Governmental agencies, schools, and city and county services had to "get the fat" out of their budgets. The League felt that some legislative acknowledgment of the forthcoming fiscal crisis was desirable but the legislators held fast, no discussion. Despite dire predictions of governmental insolvency over the need to replace \$633 million of local educational property taxes from the General Fund, the Legislature was able to fund schools and maintain most of the governmental services at acceptable levels.

During the 1991 session, the League supported a modification in the spending limitation and repeal of the 2 percent kicker. The League has felt for some time that the spending limit should be updated, and with additional General Fund dollars in short supply, the money from the kicker was needed to fund state programs. The Legislature would not consider modification of the limit, and instead of repealing the kicker, the funds were "folded in" as part of the total budget.

The League also created the "Where do we go from here?" committee. The purpose was to build together a consensus of some alternative tax reform packages. The committee was diverse and represented 12 independent special interests. They were interested in the financial stability of the state. They wanted to determine what Oregonians thought about the tax rate limitation and if there were revenue sources which Oregonians would consider for revising the tax structure. The committee commissioned a survey of voter attitudes toward tax reform. The conclusions showed no consensus for a type of tax reform but that voters were aware a problem existed.

Members of the League are participating in the Governor's Conversation with Oregon, both as small group members and as interviewers, facilitators and forum organizers. The result of the dialogue about state service levels and funding may be proposals for a revised tax structure. The League is updating its tax positions so as to be ready to consider any such proposals.

1993, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2001, 2003

The League continued its opposition to return of the two- percent kicker when education at all levels and social programs continued to be under-funded.

1993:

Education: The financial drain on the State General Fund because of the Constitutional requirement of Measure 5 to replace revenue lost to schools as a result of the property tax limitation, created a \$1.2 billion budget gap in 1993. The Legislature reduced school funding, K- 12, by \$550 million. Total public school funding, from all sources, was reduced by 8.4 percent in 1993-94 and by 11.8 percent in 1994-95. Use of lottery funds, as "backfills" for community colleges and universities, reduced estimated funding losses. Higher education received \$55 million less than in 1991-93. A raise in tuition costs, use of lottery funds and a \$20 million increase in General Fund appropriations stemmed deeper cuts in our college and university system.

1995

The estimate for the 1995-97 biennium, based on the budget of 1993-95, reveals a \$1.2 to a \$1.5 billion budget gap. The amount of replacement revenue required is expected to be \$2.8 billion. While lottery revenues are expected to rise in the next biennium, \$160 million was used to close the budget gap in 1993!

It took 207 days for the Legislature to do what it could have done in 100 days. This Legislature had to come up with a public school funding proposal. Legislators always prefer spending money to creating new taxes. To fund schools in Oregon a new source of revenue is needed. The League gave testimony to both the Senate and the House Revenue and School Funding Committees urging the committees to stay focused on the goal, school funding reform.

The result of the Legislature's financial deliberations was **SJR 10**, a constitutional amendment that limits a sales tax to a no more than a 5 percent rate, limits the imposition of the tax to the state only, limits the exemptions to the "necessities", limits state spending based on the 1995-97 budget, and limits the amount of time the sales tax can be imposed without having another statewide re-vote on the tax. This measure failed at the polls.

**HB 2500** and **HB 2343**, effective only when Measure 1 passes, would add more detail to the tax package. The sales tax is estimated to raise about \$2 billion in 1995-97.

Schools will still have to seek General Fund dollars in order to be fully funded. A statewide election on Measure 1 has been set for November 9, 1993.

1997

The League opposed Ballot Measure 47 (1996), which both cut local property taxes and capped the rate of increases at 3 percent annually.

The measure as passed was so difficult to implement (both structurally and literally) that the Legislature rewrote it and submitted the revision for a vote in May 1997. The League took no position on Measure 50 although it pointed out that the 50 percent turnout required for any revenue measures, along with the majority vote required to pass was unworkable and detrimental to governance. The League supports the measure referred by the Legislature for a May 1998 vote to repeal the 50/50 provisions of Measure 50.

There are several very serious initiative petitions relating to the Oregon tax systems, which have been certified for signature gathering. None should be signed. In the meantime, Governor John Kitzhaber, Bill Sizemore, and several independent groups are planning meetings and task forces to examine the important question of reform of Oregon's tax system. The League is monitoring all of these efforts and will keep members informed.

1999

Many measures dealing with taxation and tax credit policies were debated during the session. The League supported retaining the 2 percent kicker surplus to fund education. Instead, a constitutional amendment to "freeze" the kicker in the constitution has been referred to the November 2000 general election for voter decision. This measure passed. A second referral, which would also take potential General Fund resources out of future consideration for supporting education, health, and public safety, has also been referred to November 2000. That measure would establish a Health Security Fund and use all of the future tobacco settlement dollars for health-related matters. This measure failed.

A third referral to November 2000 also reduces the state's general resources. The constitutional amendment would allow taxpayers to deduct up to \$5000 (currently

\$3000) of their federal income tax from their state tax liability. This measure passed. Pollution and timber tax credits were increased despite the need to better fund schools and human services. Proposals for any type of "stability" or "rainy day" fund received little legislative support. With primary reliance on the state personal and corporate income tax to fund state government services and the prospect of a weakening economy, the refusal to consider strengthening the state's potential resources should be of major concern.

2001

Revenue-neutral or tax credits were the order of the day for the Legislature as no revenue-producing measures were considered while many tax credit bills were heard.

While the Oregon tax system will be studied during the interim, any options for new taxes are to be reviewed in the light of replacement, not increases in revenue. The legislative referral placing the Kicker in the Constitution was approved by the voters in Nov. 2000 and went into effect on July 1. In response to this, efforts were made to have some of the funds diverted to pay down the \$110 million owed federal pensioners prior to the deadline.

Education funding, while meeting the Governor's proposed \$5.2 billion, is inadequate for K-12 current service levels. It will be exacerbated by the revenue shortfall now predicted for 2002. The tobacco settlement funds have been placed in a health care trust with fairly stringent rules on allocation. That leaves the lottery and the personal income tax as the primary sources for the General Fund. With declining tax payments because of a weakening state economy, the ability of the state to fund its education, public safety and social services is becoming questionable. The Legislature was not inclined to face fiscal reality during the regular session and will be confronted with serious funding shortages during the special sessions. In the meantime, several petitions are being circulated, which would further reduce revenue to the state.

## 2002

The League supported the two November General Election ballot measures to provide general obligation bond funding for seismic retrofits for educational and state government buildings. Both passed. The League also supported the increase in the cigarette tax for the Oregon Health Plan and transfer of funds from the Education Stability Fund to the School Fund which passed at a Special Election in September.

## 2002-03

The 2001 Oregon Legislature met for an unprecedented five Special Sessions in 2002 and a final "sixth" in February 2003 (during the 2003 regular session) to deal with the continuing loss of General Fund revenue during the 2001-03 biennium. The League monitored all the sessions.

## 2003

The League supported Measure 28 (January special election), which was referred by the 4<sup>th</sup> Special Session of the 2001 Legislature. The measure would have provided additional funding to help balance the state budget. The measure failed.

The 2003-05 Budget was the major responsibility facing the Legislature.

Until 11 Republicans broke ranks with the House Leadership in late August to provide the necessary 3/5 majority for a budget revenue measure that would provide enough support for education, social services and public safety to prevent a gubernatorial veto, it appeared the session would extend beyond the 8 and a half months already spent. The Governor's Budget was several hundred million dollars over what the Republican legislative leadership wanted.

All session, there were hundreds of representatives from the disabled, senior, family, children, mentally ill, educational, public safety, business, and civic communities pleading their cases for adequate funds. Budgets from the Ways and Means Co-chairs, various sets of legislators, and the Governor were aired, some openly and some behind closed doors or even outside the Capitol. The Democrats wanted to determine the state services to be provided and then identify the money, while the Republicans wanted to look at the revenue, without enhancement, and then allocate for services. Finally, a package of some non-permanent taxes, a couple of permanent tax changes, and increases in corporate minimums was crafted for a General Fund budget of \$11.6 billion, which received the necessary majorities in each house to adopt a budget.

The League supported throughout the session a budget which would keep the Oregon quality of life from slipping further and would move instead towards adequacy for schools, human resources and public safety. We support what was passed and continue to work for keeping it by opposing the initiative drive for the referendum which could, if defeated, create an \$800 million hole in the budget. The referendum has qualified for the ballot and the election will be held Feb. 3, 2004.

The Legislature made major changes in the existing Public Employees Retirement System (PERS). Changes caused many employees to seek retirement earlier than they had planned (approximately 5,000 people). Litigation relating to changes in the PERS system is presently being pursued in court.

Legislation also changed the composition of the Public Employees Retirement Board and created a successor retirement system for new employees of the PERS system.  
Note: Because of the potential impact on the budget, LWVOR monitored the PERS proposals, even though the League has no specific position.

Tax expenditures (breaks, credits, etc.) came under scrutiny by the Oregon Revenue Coalition to determine how this potential revenue source could be generated by reducing or repealing some of the 350 tax breaks given by the state.

The estimate is that the state will not receive revenue amounting to \$27 billion this biennium because of such breaks - only collecting \$.55 on the dollar that could be collected. The League was a supporting member of the coalition, assisting in the efforts to inform legislators and the public about the problem. Legislators chose not to eliminate or lessen the flow of revenue, except to put some medical credit reduction for seniors with high incomes and revising the corporate tax minimums in the budget revenue package. See position on **Air Quality**.

#### 2003-04

Tax reform, an issue long supported by the League, was the subject of a two-week discussion by the House Revenue Committee. More than 200 individuals testified, including the League, providing 750 pages of recommendations and proposals. These are forming much of the background materials for the 20-member Tax Reform Task Force called for in **HJR 42** (supported by the League), passed by the Legislature late in the session. The group is charged with bringing an option or options for revising the current tax system to a Special Session of the Legislature by May 31 or within five days thereof. It is expected that small subgroups of the Task Force will hold forums around the state to receive citizen input, and the League will be active in promoting these hearings. While there is opposition to tax reform from some legislators and others, the expectation is that the Task Force will have some option or options referred to the voters by the Special Session. Rep. Lane Shetterly and Sen. Ryan Deckert are co-chairs of the Task Force.

The 2003 Legislature adopted the 2003-05 General Fund Budget with bi-partisan support, but was opposed by the Republican leadership. Through the referendum process, the budget was referred for a February 2004 vote. The League, along with many other groups and individuals, worked vigorously in support of the budget, but voters turned it down. Consequently, education, social programs and public safety activities were curtailed although the Oregon economy was slowly recovering from the disasters of 2001-03.

#### 2005

From its start, it was evident that the partisan nature of the 2005 Legislature – Republican majority in the House and Democrat majority in the Senate – would provide difficulties in budget development. The March budget forecast showed a modest revenue improvement that allowed the governor to slightly upgrade his proposed budget. The House Speaker and the Senate President announced an agreement on a budget goal for 2005-07 - \$12.5 billion, but “not any more or any less”.

The joint Ways and Means committee, hearing state agency budget requests and having budget goals from both parties, was bogged down. The Speaker pulled the House members off and set up House budget subcommittees; likewise in the Senate. One of the major roadblocks was the K-12 budget, which is 60 percent of the General Fund budget. Advocates remained adamant that \$5.5 billion was needed, and the two budget committees were about \$150 million apart. The end figure is \$5.24 billion, not enough to keep pace. Throughout the process, the League participated as a member of the Oregon Revenue Coalition, urging the repeal or reduction of selected tax expenditures to increase revenue without new taxes and opposing a laundry list of proposed new tax credits. In the end, the final 2005-07 General Fund budget of \$12.5 billion further compromises the planning and delivery of state services to Oregonians.

A change in the double majority requirement for property taxes was proposed in both houses – **HJR 14** in the House and **SJR 14** in the Senate. In her session-long pattern of assigning “no, no” bills to the House State and Federal Affairs committee, the Speaker prevented any House discussion. **SJR 14** was heard in Senate Revenue where it received broad support, including from the League, and it passed the Senate in a bi-partisan vote of 20-8. Upon reaching the Speaker, **SJR 14** was sent to House Revenue with a subsequent referral to State and Federal Affairs. The measure was a compromise produced by a coalition of legislators and interested organizations and would have broadened the number of elections when the double majority would not apply rather than repealing it altogether.

Several proposals for a rainy day or sustainability fund to augment the General Fund in times of economic stress were considered by the Senate Revenue committee. They differed in how large the fund should be (5 or 10 percent of the General Fund); how it should grow (end of session balance percent, percent of General Fund, surplus); when it could be used; and what majority percent of the Legislature was needed to implement its use. The Legislative Revenue Office produced various scenarios.

However, nothing moved forward, and Oregon is still without any contingency plan for the next recession. At least this session the Legislature realized that it could no longer raid any more trust funds or borrow money at exorbitant rates. The \$450 million borrowed at the end of 2002 is costing \$128 million in interest.

“Left on the cutting room floor” were major issues such as tax reform, long term adequacy and stability funding for public education at all levels, solutions to provide services for population growth in the areas of mental health and the elderly and in infrastructure rehabilitation.

2007

New ground was broken during the session on fiscal issues such as tax credits, new ways of planning state revenue and expenditures, serious discussion of new taxes to fund health care and public safety. However, left on the cutting room floor at the end of the session were the increase in a minimum corporate income tax (currently \$10 paid by 2/3 of Oregon corporations), a tobacco tax increase to fund health care for additional children/adults (but was referred to voters and failed—see **Physical Health Care**), and an increase in the beer tax (not done in 27 years) to fund additional state troopers. The 3/5-majority vote required to pass new or increased tax revenue impeded the will of the legislative majority to move forward state programs.

The biggest success in state fiscal policy was the passage of a Rainy Day Fund, which is funded for the coming biennium by the suspension of the corporate kicker - about

\$315 million. Each biennium, a percentage of the ending balance will be put into the fund until it reaches 10% of the biennial General Fund budget. Besides the importance of a sustainability fund for Oregon, the enactment has raised the bonding rate for Oregon, enabling the savings of millions of dollars in interest starting immediately.

A 30-member Task Force on Comprehensive Revenue Restructuring was created to advise the Governor and the Legislature on fiscal restructuring for both state and local governments and will report to the 2009 Legislature. An Oregon Revenue Advisory Council will provide technical assistance and make recommendations. There are four public members and eight legislators on the Task Force. The League will monitor their meetings.

For three sessions we have been part of the Oregon Revenue Coalition attempting to persuade the Legislature to repeal, reduce, or revise the more than 350 tax expenditures that cause the state to not receive \$27 billion in revenue in a biennium. The 2007 session spent months in discussions about tax credits and deductions, finally passing a complex and comprehensive bill dealing with credits, keeping some credits and providing revenues to cover those that were kept.

To raise revenue, Oregon personal income tax credits will be removed from taxpayers having threshold incomes of over \$156,400 (individuals), \$234,600 (couples), or

\$195,500 (heads of households). There are certain one-time credits for healthcare in TRICARE systems, and annual caps on energy credits. Among others, tax credits are allowed to individuals who own and occupy manufactured dwellings, and exemptions are given for natural resource property and property used in commercial fishing.

Some credits are expanded, such as for energy for business facilities using renewable sources, for homebuilder installed renewable systems and alternative electric systems, and for certified film production contributions to the Oregon Production Investment Fund. The amount taxpayers subtract from federal taxable income for contributions to the college savings network is also increased.

## 2008-9

The early effects of the current recession were made evident in the 2008 December revenue forecast when the projection was for a \$900 million deficit in the 2007-09 General Fund, with seven months left in the biennium. Ironically this was about the time that the kicker surplus checks for \$900 million were going to Oregon taxpayers. It was also evident that the \$17 billion needed to continue current state services for education, social programs and public safety in the 2009-11 biennium would not be available. Balancing the budget was the major work for the Legislature.

First, the state used some reserves, federal and state stimulus funds, and program cuts to fill the \$900 million hole. There were extensive hearings in the Senate and House Revenue committees as to measures to increase revenue while the Ways and Means Committee looked at all agency programs, seeking ways to both save and cut programs. In order to design a two-year budget which would protect education and services to children, families, seniors and the disabled, three things were done: (1) \$2 billion in cuts were made; reserves were used; (2) the Education Stability Fund was completely drawn down and the Rainy Fund left with \$300 million; and (3) \$733 million in marginal tax increases for those individuals with incomes above \$125,000 and \$250,000, and households with incomes above \$250,000 and \$500,000 were enacted. Also raised was the corporate minimum tax of \$10 to \$150 and marginal tax rates (five tiers) for corporations making profits.

In both cases the tax rates are lowered in 2012. Marginal tax rates apply only to the amounts above the limits levels. The League supported these tax and fee increases based on our fair and adequate tax positions and the need to support essential public services. The current 9% personal income level is paid by the majority of tax payers and has become non-progressive. Two-thirds of Oregon corporations pay only \$10 a year, an amount which has not been raised since 1931. The increases make the tax system fairer.

The budget cuts to state programs and services are being felt across the state.

Although K-12 public education received less in cuts, the community two-year schools and the state universities were hard hit, just as enrollments are increasing substantially across the state. There are now two further problems related to the 2009-11 budget. The September revenue forecast projects an additional loss of \$182 million for the General Fund. It is expected that the Special Legislative session in February 2010 will use most of the remaining Rainy Day Fund, leaving a zero End of the Biennia total. The second issue is the Special Election in January caused by the

referenda by petition of the personal and corporate tax statutes. Failure to support the tax proposals will cause an estimated \$500 million shortfall for the budget, with no reserves to cover the hole. Since the state cannot have a deficit budget, the alternative will be to further cut programs.

The review of tax credits due to be sunsetted in 2012 (**HB 2067**), probably will be discussed during the February Special session. Already being challenged is the Business Energy Tax Credit and others. Also a strong possibility to be considered in February is funding for the Rainy Day Fund and the Kicker refund distribution along with some inheritance tax issues. One of the casualties of the recession was the proposed increase to the Earned Income Tax Credit which benefits more than 200,000 families. Oregon has a very low (6%) tax credit (around \$100 per family), ranking among the lowest in the country.

The only good news to come from the session is found in the reports from the policy committees where much excellent legislation was discussed and passed – none of it costing much money. (see **Governance, Natural Resources and Social Policy Issues** updates).

## 2010

The League has been working for several years to revise the state's tax credit system to capture some of the \$27 billion not collected each biennium. For the past three years, several hundred millions of dollars have been given to green energy projects across the state. These are known as Business Energy Tax Credits (BETCs). With another revenue shortfall looming, the Special Session passed BETC Reform, limiting to \$300 million the credits which can be given in a biennium and reducing the current amount to save \$53 million needed to help rebalance the 2009-11 budget.

The state's Rainy Day Fund has been reduced to about \$12 million with no expected ending balance for carry over to 2011-13. The forecast remains bleak in terms of increased revenue for the remainder of the biennium with unemployment holding steady at 11% and state revenues from personal income taxes still down.

The Special Session did not formally consider revisions to the Kicker law although there was a proposal to do so, and the Governor urged it. The 2009 Legislature cut \$2 billion from programs and services, and further takings were made from agency reserves. Federal and state stimulus money has been nearly exhausted. Depending on the June revenue forecast, further cuts may be necessary.

Oregonians voted in favor of two income tax proposals enacted by the 2009 Legislature and referred to voters through the referendum process. The Special Election, held in January, increases the rates of taxes on personal income to those with incomes of more than \$125,000 (\$250,000 household) and \$500,000. The corporate minimum tax was raised from \$10 to \$150, applying to most businesses in Oregon. Business fees were increased along with the tax rates for corporations using brackets on profit increases.

## 2011

Adopting a new structure for preparation of the biennial budget, the Legislature and the Governor agreed to use the December 2010 revenue forecast as the limit for expenditures, along with careful use of reserves and federal funds. Gut wrenching cuts had to be made and every sector of public services was affected even though special consideration was given to vulnerable populations and public schools.

Legislation to enable stable funding for the reserve funds, revise the kicker law and improve postsecondary education was passionately discussed, but did not move forward.

Though all tax credits set to expire in 2012 were reviewed by the appropriate policy committee, in the end only \$10 million of lost revenue was captured. All tax credits will now be reviewed as they reach the sunset year. Currently, the state “gives away” about 27 billion each biennium in so called “tax expenditures” which include deferrals, deductions, exemptions and credits. Business energy tax credits (BETC) will be more transparent with the requirement that on-line annual postings be made of the company, purpose of the tax credit, credit amount, and progress of the project.

Revisions to the homestead property tax deferral program include an income means test, five-year residency requirement, and a ban on reverse mortgages. The program has been losing money because loans have not been paid back as house sales have diminished, and many owners have received reverse mortgages which means that the financial institution gets the payback before the state. A report on the implementation of the changes is required to the Interim Revenue committees and to the 2012 session.

The Task Force on Government Efficiency was reauthorized. The 2009 group brought several recommendations to the 2011 legislature regarding cost savings and efficiencies of services through cooperation of state and local agencies serving the same populations. A bill passed to look at merging motor pool services, and removing the voting for political party precinct chairs from the Primary ballot to save county funds was introduced and will be discussed in 2012. Necessary changes to both Ballot Measure 5 (1990) and Measure 50 (1997), which are seriously affecting revenues of local governments and school districts, were discussed but no action taken.

As a member of the Oregon Revenue Coalition, the League worked to bring about kicker and reserve fund revisions as well as greater reductions to tax expenditures in order to increase General Fund revenues. Other fiscal issues were changes to the Inheritance tax structure, lowering capital gains taxes, and attempts to increase tobacco taxes.

2013

**HB 2373** would have set up a Legislative Agency Review Office similar to the Legislative Revenue and Fiscal Offices at the State Legislature to review each agency's mission. This bill did not pass this session, in part due to the cost of funding this new department.

**SB 552** sets up a committee to review the current state budget process and consider recommendations for improvements, especially to link the budget with outcomes. **SB 551** does the same for capital construction budgets. The League is following this legislation.

**SB 246** authorizes Business Oregon to work with public entities to develop certified regionally significant industrial sites through a grant or loan program. The League opposed this bill.

**SB 253** creates a statewide program to inventory industrial sites and assess for their readiness to develop. Again, monies were not appropriated for this program. The League opposed this bill.

While the 2013 session did not have revenue shortfalls to deal with, the need to raise revenue for public education at all levels, along with funding from reforms to the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS), was the defining motivation for the Governor's proposed budget and the Ways and Means committee leadership budget.

These goals appeared to have early bipartisan support which disappeared when the majority Democratic party pushed through a PERS revision that only captured about

\$800 million, did not address the unfunded \$5 billion retirement liability and also require tax increases or adjustments. The Legislature was split politically by a Democratic majority of 8 (34-26) in the House and 2 in the Senate (16-14), over the Republicans. Translated into any action regarding revenue through taxes, a three/fifths majority in each chamber would be required, necessitating cooperation from both parties.

The initial PERS revisions called for a reduction in the annual COLA (cost of living adjustments) for system retirees and a removal of COLAs for any out-of-state retiree who no longer paid Oregon income taxes. For the biennial state General Fund (GF) budget, Republicans strongly favored more dollars from retirees, reduction of the unfunded PERS account liability and some tax relief for small businesses while Democrats supported increasing the cigarette tax, revising the senior medical deduction, raising the corporate minimum income tax, and limiting personal income tax itemized deductions for those with incomes over \$125,000. This was called the "Grand Bargain" for funding schools, mental health programs, assisting low income families, and revising PERS.

That plan failed on the last day, July 8, of the session on strictly party lines. The final adopted 2013-15 General Fund (GF) budget totaled \$6.55 billion and reflected a lost opportunity to move Oregon forward at all public educational levels and improve social programs and services. At the final gavel, one side wanted tax cuts and the other couldn't agree to more PERS cuts.

The total net resources for the GF were \$16.775 billion, with a projected regular ending balance (June 30, 2015) of \$179.1 million. The entire state budget was \$59.8 billion, a 4.6% increase over the 2011-13 biennium. What was accomplished included revision or repeal of some sun setting tax credits, a budget that reflected the revenue anticipated for the biennium using the new structure, and an additional \$1 billion for K-12 schools, \$1.9 billion for community colleges and universities, \$4.2 billion for human services, \$2 billion for public safety, and \$638.9 million for the judiciary, among others.

The Governor called the Legislature into a Special Session on September 30 to address a new version of the "Grand Bargain" after spending the summer crisscrossing the state and "talking to the folks" about funding public schools.

It wasn't easy, but on October 2, 2013, after public hearings, debates on the chamber floors, and arm twisting, the Oregon Legislature came together to enact a series of forward moving laws that enhance public education, improve the mental health system, protect seniors, assist the working poor, adjust PERS, and pave the way for research and future action on the issues of genetically modified organisms (GMOs). As more than one legislator said in the House and Senate chambers, after the vote, "This is Oregon, not Washington, D.C., and we have acted as Oregonians".

An additional \$244 million has been added to the 2013-15 adopted budget. Most of the changes will take place on July 1, 2014. Of the 140 million for public education, the 197 public school districts will get \$100 million, Community Colleges, \$15 million, and the four year universities, \$25 million. The budget note mandates that the higher education funds must be used for tuition relief. The cigarette tax, which will increase by 13 cents next year and an additional 1 cent yearly until 2018, will become a dedicated revenue stream for mental health programs, with \$20 million next year.

Resources for increasing the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) from 6% to 8% for the working poor, protecting services for the elderly, giving tax cuts for small businesses and providing the educational increases partially come from the reduction in the PERS COLAs. The final PERS formula will decrease all COLAs from 2% annually to 1.25% for annual pensions up to \$60,000 and .15% for those above that. In addition, the funding increases are provided by the senior medical subtraction with an age increase and an income cutoff to use, and the reduction in the amount of personal income itemized deductions that can be claimed by single tax payers with incomes over \$100,000 and couples over \$200,000. Corporate income taxes for those entities with \$1 million or more in Oregon sales will increase to 7.6%. The League opposed the initial proposal to continue the Strategic Investment Project (SIP).

## 2014

The most note-worthy bill was **SB 1534C**, which made some needed corrections to the "Grand Bargain" enacted during the 2013 Special Session with the promise of a review at the 2014 session. The law deals with changes to Oregon's senior medical deduction, tax treatment for small domestic international sales corporations, and corrections for the distribution of proceeds from the increased cigarette tax. Both the Senate and House Revenue committees spent hours amending and reworking the proposal. Such things as exemptions for certain disabled tax payers and disabled children, going back to include 2013 in calculations, actually lowering small business taxes, and "technical fixes" were included in the revisions. It passed just before the final budget bill.

**HB 5703A** was another cliff-hanger, which passed the last day of the session. While it was generally known as the Oregon Health and Science University's cancer center construction bill, with a \$300 million donation from Phil Knight (Niki) at stake, it also went back and forth between sessions of the House and Senate as well as the two Revenue committees. Several projects with statewide implications are included with job creation, medical/economic outreach and protection, and an emphasis on minority women contractors. A budget note requires oversight from the Oregon Health Authority.

**HB 4148** provides assistance to low-income homeowners who are part of the property tax deferral program. The interest rate for taxes advanced was changed from 6% compounded annually to 6% per annum.

## 2015

Both good and bad news shadowed the finances of Oregon for the 2013-15 biennium. Topping the list of improved funding during the 2015 session was the \$7.4 billion budget for Oregon K-12 public education. Allocations to the 17 public community colleges and the state's seven universities, including the Oregon Institute of Technology, all had increases. However, support for all levels of public education continues at amounts not supporting necessary growth and goal achievement. There were increases in the reserves and larger budgets for social services. The changes made during the last two biennium to the senior tax deferral program have had good results, both for homeowners and the state. The economic forecasts indicate current employment rises and stability. Additionally, the revisions to the senior medical tax deduction also saved the state several hundred million dollars.

However, the Oregon Supreme Court found the changes to PERS that helped the state and local government's budgets, were against the contract made in statute to retirees. The full impact will be felt by 2017 although PERS must refund and change payments to retirees from 2013 on, creating a large loss in its reserves. Then, because the projected state revenue for the biennium was greater than 2%, the "kicker" law came into play with \$402 million owed to personal income taxpayers. Payment will be made in the form of a tax credit to 2015 taxes, averaging \$240, but in the thousands to those with high income. The economic forecasts for future biennium show stability up to 2017, and then decreasing revenue.

In **HB 2171**, the Legislative Revenue Office is charged to bring a full tax reform plan by 2017, with discussions and reviews by the House and Senate Revenue committees in the interims. Hopefully, the necessary changes to Oregon's revenue stream will then be addressed.

The Special Joint Tax Credits committee continued to review expiring tax credits with the difficult task of keeping needed social policy supports and reaching goals set by the Ways and Means committee for reductions.

The League supported **HB 2069** to create a Task Force on Capital Construction Budget Process so that legislators would have data on the status of all state buildings. It died in Ways and Means, but the Dept. of Administrative Services found a way to hire a state architect to begin this process.

2016

**HB 4110B**, the Earned Income Tax Credit, increased support for low income families from 8% to 11% of the federal credit for those with at least one dependent three years old or younger. The increase is estimated to rise from \$229 to \$315. The League has lobbied for such a percentage increase since 2013.

2017

[The NEW Joint Committee on Tax Reform](#) did substantial work toward creating a business tax reform bill; but votes were not available to move [HB 2830](#) out of Committee. HB 2830 would have been the most substantial tax reform since 1990. In [LWVOR Testimony](#) supporting [HB 2830](#) we urged passage of a Commercial Activities Tax (CAT) believing that it offered a more stable revenue flow than our current system, especially in economic downturns where our present tax system has resulted in a yo-yo of budget cutbacks and unpredictability for essential services provided by the state. Earlier in the 2017 session [League of Women Voters Testimony](#) for [LC 3549 DRAFT](#) encouraged continued work on this critical topic while business interests lobbied against tax reform.

2018

The regular session passed [SB 1528](#) A special session passed HB 4301, extending pass-through tax breaks to sole proprietors, a follow-up to [SB 1528](#).

2019

A Commercial Activities Tax (CAT) [finally passed](#). See [K-12 Funding section below](#).

2025

After a number of attempts over the last six years, a bill addressing workplace age discrimination, [HB 3187](#), finally passed. The League wrote [testimony](#) in support of the original bill. The bill prohibits employers from asking for a date of birth or graduation date on job applications unless it is a job requirement or an offer of employment has already been made. While a move forward, the bill also struck key provisions contained in the bill as originally filed. The problem that HB 3187 initially sought to address arose from courts' interpretations of discrimination "based on age." This language had been construed so narrowly that all employers needed to do was to point to one other reason for an action unfavorable to its employees and they would thereby avoid liability - even if age was a factor in their decision. The first version of HB 3187 sought to address this problem by clarifying that discrimination "based on age" can include factors such as salary,

length of employment service, or retirement or pension eligibility or status.

2025 (Rev. Sept. 2025 Peggy Lynch)

The League continues to follow state and local revenue issues. We listen to the quarterly revenue forecasts to help determine our advocacy for a variety of policy issues. The state has a new State Economist. His appointment was, in part, in hopes that fresh eyes will reduce the “kicker” refunds and more accurately provide legislators with clarity on revenue projections. As a result of recent federal legislation, Oregon will see a reduction in the May 2025 forecast resulting in a need to address budget cuts or raising revenue in the 2026 session.

## K-12 Funding

1993

See previous section on Fiscal Policy.

1999

Because the state is now responsible for the major portion of K-12 funding, the Legislature seems to feel that it should exert more control over local school districts and decisions that affect K-12 schools. During the 1999 session a total of 404 school- related bills were introduced. By far the most contentious were those establishing the K-12 funding level, and a proposal to allow charter schools. Others ran the gamut from gun safety instruction in the elementary grades to delaying the language requirement of the Education Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

The Charter Schools bill (SB 100) was hotly debated for an extended period of time. The League opposed the bill in its original form. We testified in favor of requiring state certification for charter school teachers, and limiting the amount of money local districts must pass along to charter schools. In its final form, the Charter Schools Bill requires at least 50% of teachers to be state certified. Local school districts will be responsible for chartering these schools. A special certificate can be issued for the charter school teachers, and they must pass a background check.

2000

See Position History—Fiscal Policy for information about local option levies.

2001

Education fared reasonably well during the 2001 session, receiving nearly half of the State's General Fund. The final appropriation for K-12 fell nearly \$870 million short of the target set by the Quality Education Model. The League will continue to work for adequate funding for education at all levels.

2003

Although not considered adequate by many education supporters, the \$5.2 billion allocated to Oregon public schools was considerably better than the \$4.9 billion proposed by the legislative leadership and Ways and Means. If the referendum on the budget should fail, schools could lose \$400 million, so local school districts have been cautious in spending levels this fall even though the dollars are needed.

The 2003 Legislature adopted the 2003-05 General Fund Budget with bi-partisan support, but was opposed by the Republican leadership. Through the referendum process, the budget was referred for a February 2004 vote. The League, along with many other groups and individuals, worked vigorously in support of the budget, but voters turned it down. Consequently, education, social programs and public safety activities were curtailed although the Oregon economy was slowly recovering from the disasters of 2001-03.

2007

Funding for K-12 schools was a priority of the 2007 Legislature. A record \$6.3 billion was allocated, up to 80% of the Quality Education Model. The funding for public schools will enable smaller classes, add-backs of the arts and libraries and better classroom equipment. College tuition may not change after 10 years of increases, and maintenance and rehab of older buildings will take place for all levels of public education. Community colleges did not fare as well, and many of the state's 17 institutions still must cut programs and staff.

Added this session was a provision that allows school districts to assess a construction excise tax on new residential, commercial and industrial construction to help pay for the impacts of new growth. Schools are also required to develop a Facilities Plan that can then be considered by local governments when land use decisions are made.

2019

A new Corporate Activity Tax (CAT) passed, raising \$1 billion/year for P-K education. Opponents dropped plans to put it on the ballot, so the tax takes effect January 1, 2020. See the Education section for [HB 3427](#)'s CAT-funded sweeping improvements to public and pre-school education. Some supporters have worked to increase education resources ever since Measures 5 and 50 hollowed out property tax funding for schools and local governments in the 1990s. The Corporate Activity Tax (CAT) charges businesses 0.57% on commercial activity in excess of \$1 million after deducting 35 percent of either purchased inputs or labor costs, leaving the vast majority of Oregon businesses exempt. LWVOR cautioned in vain against adding many tax expenditures to the CAT, but strongly supported the Student Success Act as a whole.

# Initiative, Referendum and Recall Position

Adopted 1988; Revised 1996; Educational Update 2001\*; Updated 2025

**A. Statute Initiatives.** The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports the constitutional right of Oregon citizens to propose or revise statutes through the direct initiative process. The League supports the following:

1. Requiring a number of valid signatures not less than six (6) percent of the total number of votes cast for all candidates for governor at the last election at which a governor was elected for a term of four years;
2. Requiring more than 25 signatures to file the prospective petition with the Secretary of State;
3. Prohibiting legislative changes to an initiative statute for at least two years from its effective date, except to clarify implementation and to correct errors in form and style;
4. Requiring an advisory opinion as to the constitutionality of each proposed initiative after it has qualified for the ballot. Such opinion should be published in the Voters' Pamphlet;
5. Limiting the time frame for collecting signatures to one year;
6. Optional use of the indirect initiative.

**R. Constitutional Initiatives.** The League of Women Voters of Oregon discourages amending the Oregon Constitution by the initiative process. If amendments by initiatives are allowed, the League supports the following restrictions:

1. Requiring a number of valid signatures not less than ten (10) percent of the total number of votes cast for all candidates for governor at the last election at which a governor was elected for a term of four years;
2. Requiring more than 25 signatures to file the prospective petition with the Secretary of State;
3. Establishing a formula for a geographic distribution of signatures in order to reflect statewide interest in a measure;
4. Requiring an advisory opinion as to the constitutionality of each proposed initiative after it has qualified for the ballot. Such opinion should be published in the Voters' Pamphlet;
5. Limiting the time frame for collecting signatures to one year;
6. Requiring more than a simple majority of the total votes cast for the measure for passage;
7. Exempting the Oregon Bill of Rights and revenue measures from the initiative process; and
8. Using the indirect initiative process and scheduling discussion of a qualified initiative first on the agenda of the next legislative session.

- S. The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports the Oregon petition referendum process as provided in the Oregon Constitution.
- T. The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports the recall process as provided in the Oregon Constitution.
- U. The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that ballot titles should be stated in clear, concise language and should avoid confusing negatives.
- V. The League of Women Voters of Oregon opposes paying petition circulators by the signature. Paid petitioners must be required to identify themselves as such, personally and on the signature sheets. With reasonable restrictions, petitioners should be allowed to collect signatures in highly visible privately and publicly owned locations.
- W. The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports publication and distribution of a state Voters' Pamphlet prior to statewide elections and believes that:
  1. The state has an obligation to provide the voters with accurate information so that voters can make reasoned choices;
  2. All ballot measures must be included with official explanatory statements, an official advisory opinion on constitutionality, effects of a "yes" and "no" vote, and summaries of the main arguments for and against the measures;
  3. The number of arguments for and against the measures to be included should be limited; and
  4. The fees charged per page should more clearly reflect the actual costs.

\*Updated for background information only – no position change.

#### 2025 Position Update

1. The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that local and county elections operations must have adequate funding and staffing levels sufficient to meet public needs and provide for strong, ongoing voter education.
2. The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes all elected officials should be subject to recall, but not during their first six months in office.
3. The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that persons seeking the recall of a public official should state the reasons and specify grounds including malfeasance (acting unlawfully while performing duties), nonfeasance (failure to perform duties), serious crimes, lack of fitness, corruption, or incompetence. The grounds on which an elected official may be recalled should be described in Oregon statute.
4. The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes an adequate recall election schedule should provide time for voter education and full participation in the election. The timeline should:
  1. Allow elections officials to provide ballots to overseas and uniformed-service members at least 45 days before an election.
  2. Allow new voters adequate time to be notified of their requirement to register before an election in which they wish to cast ballots.

3. Allow time for elections officials, advocates, and civic organizations to engage prospective voters.
4. Allow no more than 90 days to obtain signatures on a recall petition.
5. To ensure adequate time for elections officials and staff to oversee signature verification and prepare ballots, and to contain elections-related costs, the League of Women Voters of Oregon supports restricting recall elections to one of the four election dates identified in Oregon law.
6. The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that recall petitions should provide detailed information about how seats vacated by a successful recall are to be filled after the election. This information should be provided by elections staff. Seats should be vacated for the shortest time practical, with a scheduled election allowing voters to choose their public official. The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports filling vacated positions by interim appointment rather than through simultaneous election in which the proposed recall of a public official appears on the ballot alongside candidates competing simultaneously for that very office.
7. The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that recall petition circulators should be required to be Oregon residents and that these circulators should wear visible identification indicating whether they are paid or volunteers.
8. The League of Women Voters supports disclosure of the sources and amounts of campaign-related funding for recall proponents and opponents, with such disclosure beginning early and occurring regularly and in a timely way, so that voters can learn about groups involved as petitions circulate.

## Position History and Implementation - Initiative, Referendum and Recall

1985

Members of the LWVOR questioned whether the initiative and referendum process in Oregon was being used as originally intended or was being abused by special interest groups. The 1985 Convention of the LWVOR adopted a study of the initiative and referendum process in Oregon.

1989

The Oregon Supreme Court ruled that petitioners are allowed at tables in certain areas of shopping malls at certain times.

1995

Numerous proposals to revise the process were made: to increase signatures for constitutional amendments and lower them for statute petitions; to require petition passers to be paid in other ways than by the signature (hourly, daily, as a contract employee, etc.); and to require some type of legal review. The Legislature passed one law that bans selling or buying signature sheets and approved a constitutional amendment to require 20 percent of signatures for each initiative petition to be obtained in each of the five Congressional districts. That measure has been referred for a statewide vote in May 1996. There are a number of initiative petitions being circulated which could affect the initiative process.

1997

Again, using the League's new position with regard to the Oregon initiative process, the League testified in support of increasing the number (percentage) of signatures needed to qualify a constitutional initiative for the ballot, and to make changes in the *Voters' Pamphlet* to eliminate the unnecessary pages of measure pros and cons while protecting the ability to have all sides heard. Initiative reform was given a short shrift in legislative hearings, and few of the number proposed were heard. The important issues remain so the League will be involved in preparing for the next session.

There are several petitions circulating with regard to the initiative process. None of them are in the best interests of direct democracy and should not be signed.

1999

The League supported several bills that would have provided for review of initiative petitions prior to circulation either by the Attorney General or Legislative Counsel. Hearings were held, but none passed out of committee. Three constitutional amendments related to the initiative process have been referred by the Legislature to the May 2000 primary. The League supported these. One would increase the number of signatures required for qualifying a constitutional amendment initiative for the ballot (from 8 percent to 12 percent); one would limit the subject matter that could be addressed in a constitutional amendment initiative; and one would change the timelines for submitting petitions to the State Elections Division and verifying petition signatures. The League testified in favor of each.

2000

In the May Primary, voters approved a constitutional amendment that lengthens the period for signature verification on initiative and referendum petitions.

2001

Although more bills than in 1999 proposing changes in the initiative system were discussed in the Rules committees of both houses, only one real change was adopted. Petition campaigns will now be required to file three contribution and expenditure reports at the time of the May Primary election. This will give an early window on who is supporting various initiatives, how much is being spent, and how the campaign efforts are going. The League supported several proposals, including those for some type of legal/drafting review of all petitions and increasing significantly the number of signatures required on the prospective (first) petition to prevent ballot title shopping, but none came out of committee.

2002

The League supported the initiative to ban payment by the signature for initiative petition passers on the November 2002 General Election ballot. It passed by a 3 to 1 margin.

2003

Although several amendments to the initiative process were proposed to the Legislature, only one received serious consideration. The League continues to support changes to the system that would require some type of judicial review on legality and/or constitutional viability, closing the loopholes allowing multiple filings in order to get a "suitable" ballot title, as well as require some limits on subject matter for constitutional amendments to protect the Bill of Rights and the General Fund. The League participated in the Senate Rules workgroup to revise a proposal which would increase the number of signatures necessary to initially file a petition. The version passed by the Senate would have required 2500 signatures instead of only 25. It was altered in the House Rules Committee by amendments proposed by an outside attorney/lobbyist. That version was opposed by the League and other supporters and died in committee.

2005

The usual bills, which would require additional signatures for a prospective petition filing (only 25 now), some type of legal review for initiatives, changing timelines for Supreme Court review of ballot titles, and preventing ballot title "shopping" were introduced but received no consideration. The Governor did sign the bill, which requires a more complete description of the financial effects of passing or not passing a ballot measure that must be printed on the ballot and in the Voters' Pamphlet.

2007

After several frustrating sessions of trying for changes in the Oregon initiative process, real progress was made during this legislative term. There were many hearings and behind the scenes discussions, and the Elections Division (Secretary of State), the Attorney General and the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industry worked together to improve the signature gathering system.

Of particular importance to the League is the new requirement for 1000 petition signatures before a ballot title will be issued. This will enable some public discussion of the petition issue, and save public resources caused by ballot title shopping. Each petition uses the Secretary of State's office, the Attorney General's office and sometimes the Supreme Court when a title is challenged. The League has supported an increase in the signatures required since its position was adopted 10 years ago.

Other important initiative reforms include:

- Petitions do not have to be separated by county; the new central voter registration database will be used to verify signatures.
- All paid petition signature gatherers must register with the Secretary of State, obtain picture ID and receive training regarding the initiative process.
- Employers of paid petitioners must keep accurate payroll records and have the records available for review by representatives of the Attorney General, Secretary of State and Bureau of Labor and Industry.
- Templates for the petition signature sheets will be prepared by the Elections Division and used by all petitioners. A new single-signature petition sheet will allow electronic download and self-certification.
- The new law goes into effect January 1, 2009, and will apply to any petitions signed after that date. During the transition, the Elections Division will separate and count the two sets of petitions.

2008-09

The 2007 legislative session brought important changes to the initiative system which were implemented starting January 1, 2008. Lawsuits were brought challenging the right of the Secretary of State to throw out initiative petitions and to the formula for signature verification. They were not successful, although the Court recommended that the Secretary of State examine the signature verification process and make improvements. To that end, all signatures will now be verified by the Elections Division and not sent to each county.

The League believes the requirement to collect 1000 signatures in order to get a ballot title and the tightening of paid petitioner requirements to register and use Secretary of State templates is improving the process along with the oversight of payments to paid petitioners.

There was extensive new legislation. **HB 2005** was submitted by the Secretary of State and supported by the League. It took most of the session, with numerous amendments, to pass and be signed by the Governor. Highlights include (1) further strengthening paid-petitioner gatherers' regulations, clarifying the payroll processing tracking, increasing penalties and fines for fraud, distinguishing between paid and volunteer gatherers and requiring petitions to be turned in each month; (2) requiring all initiative petition committees to have a treasurer who regularly reports on campaign contributions and expenditures; and (3) giving local governments a two year limit on collecting petition signatures for issue proposals rather than an unspecified limit. Also passed was a restriction on "ballot title shopping" which will allow the Attorney General to issue the same ballot title when two or more submitted petitions are substantially the same.

The Task Force on Revenue Restructuring recommended two other initiative changes which were drafted as bills but did not pass from committee. The League, and other good government groups, participated in a session-long initiative reform coalition which will continue to work for these changes. These included the probable cost of implementation of an initiative in the ballot title and requiring a time limit on when an unsuccessful initiative can be brought to voters again. Requiring that every signature on petitions be counted rather than the current use of a formula and increasing the number of words on a ballot title from 15 to 40 also did not pass.

2010

No formal revisions were proposed during the Special Session, but the House Rules committee conducted an informational hearing on issues dealing with further initiative reform. The League presented several recommendations to be considered during the 2011 session. These included placing a limit on when twice defeated initiatives can be brought back for voter consideration, and mandating up-front cost information and a funding source on any initiative seeking state funding.

2011

Oregon's initiative process will be improved by the passage of two proposals which were supported by the League. A Citizen's Initiative Review Commission has been established to oversee the review and discussion of ballot qualified initiatives.

The Council will have 11 members with funding for the review panels coming from both private and public sources. Members of the review panels (18-24) will be compensated for travel, meals, and lodging. The second measure requires that chief petitioners be held more accountable for their payrolls (if signature gatherers were paid by the signature, which is illegal, chief petitioners would be responsible for fraud).

2013

Two measures to improve the Oregon direct democracy system were enacted, as well as a third to continue the initiative review process.

- The background checks on paid initiative petitioners are mandated and are currently carried out by the Secretary of State's office (SOS). Under the new legislation, these criminal checks must now be performed by the chief petitioner of any initiative proposal and proof given to the SOS when the person registers as a signature gatherer.
- The current law requires that any person employed to pass petitions must register with the SOS and receive specific training regarding Oregon's rules and regulations for the initiative process. Under a new statute, any organization, individual or entity that pays for petitioners must register with the SOS and receive training in the process.
- The continuation bill for the Commission to oversee the process for the Citizen Initiative Review (CIR) panels that are privately funded, but have state sanction, barely made it through the session, even with strong League support. The ability of citizens to meet with initiative sponsors and opponents and to reach conclusions reported in the media and the Voters Pamphlet is an important tool in educating voters. The bill finally came out of the Ways and Means subcommittee on General Government on the last day to get a Senate vote. It is not really under any specific agency and staffing is not a priority, even though it meets as a state endorsed group. Funding is provided through Healthy Democracy (HD), the founding organization for the CIR process, with foundation and individual grants. HD is working with the Commission and raising funds for the 2014 panels.

## Oregon State Courts

Adopted 1979, 2007

**The League of Women Voters of Oregon affirms:**

- **The separation of powers provided in Article III, Section 1 of the Oregon Constitution;**

- The treatment of the Oregon Judicial Department, the third branch of our state government, as a separate, independent, co-equal branch of state government.

**The League believes that:**

- The State of Oregon should provide access to its courts that meets the diverse needs of all people who use the state courts.
- Judges must be free to decide cases based upon the facts of the particular case and the applicable law, independent of the influence of public opinion and political and partisan pressures.

**In order to improve the budget process and funding for the Oregon Judicial Department, the League supports:**

- Adequate and stable funding to perform the Department's core functions and critical services;
- Funding by the Legislature of mandated programs or procedures for the state courts;
- An independent compensation commission to set judicial compensation of state court judges.

**The state should ensure that counties are able to provide adequate court facilities, maintenance of those facilities, and security equipment and services.**

**The League believes that the following criteria should be used in evaluating a system of selecting judges in Oregon. The system should:**

- Be as free from political influence as possible;
- Encourage and attract the most competent and experienced people;
- Include a method of evaluating judges and judicial candidates.

**To preserve judicial impartiality and fairness and to protect the public's perception of this impartiality and fairness, the League believes that efforts to obtain campaign finance reform in Oregon should include the financing of judicial campaigns.**

**The League supports alternative dispute resolution (ADR) programs (such as arbitration, mediation, and settlement conferences) as a way to resolve disputes in appropriate cases, recognizing that, in some cases, a trial will be necessary. In order to operate effective ADR programs, Oregon's courts should, at a minimum, have:**

- Adequate facilities in which to conduct mediation and arbitration processes;
- Availability of trained and qualified arbitrators and mediators;

- Financial assistance for those unable to afford access to ADR;
- Adequate and stable funding.

**The League encourages the development of specialty courts (such as commercial court) and problem-solving courts (such as drug and mental health courts) within the Oregon Judicial Department. In order to operate effective specialty and problem-solving courts, Oregon's courts need:**

- Adequate court staff;
- Facilities in which to hold hearings;
- Availability of service providers and outpatient and residential treatment;
- Adequate and stable funding.

## Position Implementation - Oregon State Courts

1981

The League took an active role in supporting the legislative effort that created a statewide judicial system. The system excluded municipal courts and justice courts. The chief justice of the Supreme Court is the administrative head.

1983

The General Fund has provided full funding for district and circuit courts since January.

2002

The League opposed two ballot measures on the November 2002 General Election ballot regarding judicial procedures. One would have required Supreme Court and Courts of Appeals justices to be elected by district and to reside within those districts. The other would have revised the procedure for filling judicial vacancies, holding judicial elections and allowing a "none of the above" vote in judicial elections. Both were constitutional amendments and defeated, but by narrow margins.

2003

See Constitutional Provisions.

2007

The League was able to testify in support of higher judicial salaries and more funding for the judicial system as a whole as a result of the new Oregon State Courts position.

2009

The Oregon Judicial Department (OJD) faced a tough budget review due to the loss of revenues for this biennium. The OJD Budget passed out of Ways and Means with a 15% reduction, but retained the 173 judicial positions and salary levels for the judges.

However, the cuts came in support staff, the operation of the circuit courts and the new technology for electronic filings. The League testified in support of the OJD budget, the system to carry out judicial orders and the treatment courts. **HB 2287** continued current court surcharges and established new temporary fees in state courts to provide a backfill of 7.5% for the OJD Budget. In addition, **HB 5054** appropriated \$11 million for court facilities deferred maintenance in 12 counties. The Oregon Judiciary study brought attention to the courthouses in the Oregon judicial districts throughout the state.

2011

The Budget for the Oregon Judicial Department took reductions as well as every other state funded agency. Additional Court of Appeals judges were requested but not approved. Repairs to courthouses were boosted by **HB 3525** that assigned 10% of civil punitive damages to the Courthouse Capital Improvement Fund. The e-Court project is the major expense for the department now. The progress of the project will be reviewed throughout the session. The League supports the OJD budget.

**HB 2710** raised court fees for civil cases, and **HB 2712** raised court fees and fines for criminal offenses and violations. The fines for traffic violations were adjusted and a few were reduced to be fair for low income residents. During the last session, **HB 2287** the fee bill did not raise expected revenues for the court system. The Joint Interim Committee on Justice System Revenues worked on these two bills prior to the 2011 session. The League commended the committee for their work.

2013

The Oregon Judicial Department Budget included the 3 additional judges and staff for the Court of Appeals. It also included salary increases for State District Court Judges. Defense Attorneys had a raise, too, although it was smaller. The Supreme Court Building Preservation started with external repairs and delayed others. Projects for a new courthouse in Union County and repairs in four eastern county courthouses were scheduled. The League supported the OJD Budget.

The Chief Justice was given authority to set fees for the new e Court filing system. The statewide court fines were reviewed and the revenues were reallocated among the state and local courts.

The current priorities were to maintain court operations five days a week, restore family court support staff and continue juvenile court records projects. Drug treatment courts will be funded through the Criminal Justice Commission, and data will continue to be kept by that agency.

2015

The League supported the 2015 Budget restoration of support staff to circuit courts so that court staffing is again at the 2009 level. Two new judges were granted to alleviate crowded dockets in Marion and Multnomah Counties, but no increases in judicial salaries were approved. Public Defense attorney salaries have been increased. The Construction of two new county courthouses, in Multnomah and Union Counties, will go forward. Maintenance projects on 5 district courthouses were included in the budget. The League continues to support family and treatment court projects, as well as mediation to resolve problems.

2017

The Oregon Judicial Department Budget, **HB 5013**, was augmented by separate bills for new fees and fines. The Chief Justice requested new judicial positions but was only awarded 2 new positions in Washington County and Josephine County. The Ways and Means Public Safety Committee also considered wage increases for Judges and for Public Defense Attorneys in **HB 5013** and **HB 2616**. However, both were denied due to budget constraints. In a related bill, District Attorneys will be required to record grand jury proceedings in **SB 505** and make the recordings available to Defense Attorneys. In **SB 846** handcuffs on juvenile offenders were to be removed before court appearances. The League monitors court processes and supports the OJD Budget as the third branch of government

2021 (rev. 2021, Karen Nibler)

The **Oregon Judicial Department** Budget has had continual support from the league since 2007. This session OJD requested additional funding for the costs of technology services, improvements to county courthouses, and additional judges. The **Criminal Justice Commission** Budget provides grant funds for innovative programs within the court process which are favored by league members.

**Public Defense Consortium Services** are critical to the court criminal process so the budget was supported by the League. However, this session limitations have been set on their financial operations so follow up on this process will be important.

2025

The League submitted testimony in support of the removal of the statute of limitations for sexual assault victims. The bill passed with overwhelming support in both chambers. We also supported the continuation of the Legal Services Pilot Program for Coffee Creek Correctional Facility. The program was allocated \$1.2 million at session's end.

# Public Records Law - Right to Know

## National Position

### Position Implementation—Public Records Law

1993

A legislatively-mandated task force, headed by the Secretary of State, prepared and presented to the Legislature two measures revising Oregon's 20-year-old public records statutes. One would have codified the more than 3450 exemptions into categories under one law, and would have clarified when the public's right to know is greater than the protection of personal records. The other would have changed the rules for boards that license various professional occupations so that complaints would be publicly acknowledged and the actions taken after investigation made known. The first measure died after considerable hearings, primarily as a result of heavy medical profession lobbying. The second was passed with little of its original substance intact. It is anticipated that the Secretary of State will continue to work on the needed revisions for 1995.

2003

See [Election Laws](#) for exemption support.

2015

SB 9 will hopefully bring about much needed changes to the Oregon public records system. Problems exist in records retention, exemptions to access, timeliness in answering requests, and low funding for records staff, and maintenance. The legislation requires the Secretary of State (SOS) to conduct a performance audit of state agencies' retention and disclosure practices regarding public records with a sample of agencies. The audit will examine large agencies (500 or more employees), medium size agencies (51-500), and small agencies (up to 50). By November 20, the SOS is to report to the Legislature with recommendations for records practices and procedures, storage availability, fees and waivers, system of cataloging entries, exemptions (400 currently), workloads, staff accuracy, staff cuts, timeliness, training and responsibility, inconsistency, and complaints. Best practices in public records management and the use of technology are to be included in the report. The problems also exist at local government levels, and the expectation that the recommendations can be useful in addressing those issues. The League strongly supports the public right to know.

# Redistricting

Adopted 2007

**Congressional and legislative redistricting should advance the fundamental purposes of representative democracy and a republican form of government by affording the people a meaningful choice in electing their representatives and holding the government accountable to the people.**

**The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that the Oregon legislative and congressional redistricting system should be efficient, adequately funded, based on well-defined criteria, subject to a reasonable and effective timetable, and have an open and public process.**

- A. Any redistricting plan should assure that voters are effectively able to hold their public officials accountable, responsible, and responsive, and be based on the following criteria:**
- **Adhere to all federal constitutional and legal requirements, such as that every district should have equal population, be contiguous, and meet the requirements of the Voting Rights Act;**
  - **Promote competitiveness and partisan fairness;**
  - **Consider other criteria, such as respect for political subdivisions, communities of interest, and geographic barriers.**
- X. Any redistricting plan should be developed independently of the Legislature in a nonpartisan manner with substantial public input. The Legislature may be afforded an opportunity to review the plan and accept or reject it.**
- Y. The Oregon Supreme Court should promptly review and rule on any challenge to a redistricting plan and require adjustments if the criteria have not been met.**
- Z. Oregon should conduct redistricting only once during each decade following the federal census.**

## Position Implementation—Redistricting

1979

The Legislature established criteria for congressional and legislative redistricting. For the first time in Oregon history the Legislature completed its own redistricting in 1981.

The city of Portland, the LWV of Portland and others filed suit in the Oregon Supreme Court stating the plan was unconstitutional because one district would not have been represented by a state senator for two years. The Court agreed and the Secretary of State's office redrew district lines in the Portland area.

1991

The Legislature could not agree on any of the four plans submitted by legislators, and it was left to the Secretary of State to submit a plan to the Oregon Supreme Court. The LWVOR president sat on the 10-member special Redistricting Panel set up by Secretary Keisling, and the League supported the draft plan which addressed the one-person, one-vote issue with only a minor deviation, and which closely adhered to communities of interest. The Secretary of State's plan was approved by the Oregon Supreme Court with minor revisions.

2001

Again, the Legislature could not agree on a redistricting plan and the matter of redrawing the Oregon legislative districts fell to the Secretary of State (as in 1971, 1981 and 1991). Early discussions were held by both Rules committees, forums were conducted around the state, and maps were drawn using the latest technology in mapping, but the bi-partisan effort broke down when the time came to reveal the maps being proposed by the Democratic and Republican leadership. On strictly party lines, the Legislature passed the Republican proposal, and it was vetoed by the governor who required a bi-partisan agreement. The Secretary's plan, which proposed some major changes in legislative district boundaries, was submitted to the Oregon Supreme Court in mid-August and then challenged. The Supreme Court upheld the Secretary of State's plan except for one minor technical problem. Several local Leagues are involved with the redistricting activities of their cities and counties. The League's criteria for evaluating apportionment plans were based on the guidelines of the Federal Elections Commission.

2007

The League has adopted a new redistricting position and distributed it to members of the Legislature in hopes of discussion about the 2010 federal census and the need to redistrict in 2011. We testified generally about the current redistricting statute and recommended beginning the planning for the process. The only measure that passed provides that legislators elected in 2010 will remain in office until the start of the 2013 legislative session, although the new districts' boundaries presumably will have been enacted by the December 2011 deadline. There needs to be clarification about the 2012 elections and district boundaries.

The Public Commission on the Oregon Legislature (PCOL) recommended the use of a five member, semi-independent commission to draw up Oregon's redistricting plan. It was not drafted into a bill.

2011

The 2011 Legislature accomplished the critical task of redrawing the state's legislative boundaries for the first time in 40 years. The Oregon Constitution requires that the Legislature revise the lines by July 1 in the year after every ten-year federal census.

Otherwise the job goes to the Secretary of State. Both Senate and House Redistricting committees were established, and they met jointly. Hearings were held around the state and at the Capitol to receive public input. New technology, using the current boundaries as the starting point, and precise maps greatly assisted in the successful conclusion. The League discussed the importance of criteria with the committees and emphasized the importance of one person, one vote to our representative democracy.

2015

The LWVOR joined a small coalition of organizations called Redistricting Matters that grew out of the City Club of Portland's redistricting study. The coalition lobbied for several bills including prisoner gerrymandering, **SB 331**. A minor bill **HB 2974** was passed that requires public hearings before and after any redistricting maps are adopted by the legislature.

2017

Secretary of State Dennis Richardson invited the LWVOR to appoint a representative, Norman Turrill, to a Redistricting Task Force of some 17 members from the whole political spectrum. After months of work, the Task Force produced a report to the legislature recommending an independent redistricting commission similar to that of California. The legislature ignored the report.

2019

The LWVOR formed a coalition of several organizations eventually named People Not Politicians (PNP). The coalition filed three initiative petitions for an independent redistricting commission, IP 57, IP 58 and IP 59, which were identical except that IP 58 was for congressional redistricting, IP 59 was for legislative redistricting, and IP 57 was for both. Eventually in 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic hit and IP 58 and IP 59 were dropped so we could concentrate our resources on IP 57. We were able to collect some 60 thousand signatures using mostly mailed petitions. PNP filed a lawsuit in federal district court asserting that Oregon state restrictions for the pandemic violated its First and Fourteenth Amendment rights.

The district court ruled in PNP's favor, ordering the SoS to accept our petitions and place IP 57 on the November ballot. However, the Oregon Attorney General appealed all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, which issued a stay. The 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals remanded the case back to the federal district court, which has not ruled as of Jan. 2021.

# Natural Resources

## National Position

**The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that natural resources should be managed as interrelated parts of life-supporting ecosystems. Resources should be conserved and protected to assure their future availability. Pollution of these resources should be controlled in order to preserve the physical, chemical and biological integrity of ecosystems and to protect public health.**

1999

A "sleeper" bill passed and was signed by the governor that creates a new legislative office of natural resources. A policy administrator will be appointed by the unanimous vote of the President and Minority Leader of the Senate and the Speaker and Minority Leader of the House. Money was allocated for this new office.

Much new natural resources legislation will require implementing agency rules. Much between session League work will involve monitoring these rule-making processes.

2003

All natural resource agency budgets, particularly the regulatory agencies, suffered at the hands of the 2003 legislative Joint Ways and Means Committee. Both budget cuts and budget notes aimed at controlling agencies' programs and functions will significantly affect both natural resources programs and League action in 2003-04.

This session, LWVOR took action on two important issues affecting natural resources. We opposed HB 2281, a "stringency" bill which would have limited state standards for environmental quality to no more stringent standards than minimum federal requirements. The bill died in committee on adjournment. LWVOR also testified before the State Land Board regarding standing for a non-profit organization to be a party in a contested case hearing. This issue is still being debated.

2005

The League's Natural Resources legislative activity centered on agency budgets. The League defended the budgets of DLCD, DSL, DEQ and the Columbia Gorge Commission. Ultimately budgets were passed after conference agreements.

Budget notes, which the League opposes as non-legislative since they are not voted on by the full legislature, appeared as attachments to natural resources budgets. One example was the budget note that became an amendment to DEQ's budget (see Air Quality). Another was a budget note added to the Department of Forestry's budget, which required a timber harvest level that the agency did not think sustainable. The Governor subsequently directed DOF to ignore the budget note.

2006

With the addition of revenue due to an expanding economy, the League testified in support of many Natural Resource budgets with success for increases: Water Resources Dept. (WRD), DLCD, DSL and OPRD. We also followed the DEQ and OWEB budgets. Working with partners, we assured that the monies raised by Measure 66 were spent in the manner expected by the voters. With the increase in interest and concern regarding water, we were pleased to see more monies for water studies.

2009

As with all state budgets, Natural Resource agencies were faced with either making up to 30% cuts or accepting the choice of increasing fees for service. Natural Resource Agencies are but 2% of the general fund/lottery state budget but are asked to protect our air, water and land.

The League maintained its participation in the Ways and Means process to advocate for public funding for these important jobs: Department of Environmental Quality (**SB 5521**), Land Conservation and Development (**SB 5531**), Water Resources (**SB 5551**) and Oregon Parks and Recreation (**HB 5033**). Fees for service continued to increase, but we maintained our position that fees should not cover more than 50% of services since these agencies serve an important public function, often to protect the health and safety of Oregonians. Finally, we were asked to provide testimony on the connections among agencies related to water. We pointed out the differences in responsibilities between large agencies, that can use economies of scale, and small agencies, who must be efficient just to survive. Consolidation of field offices has been considered before. The Ways and Means Natural Resources Subcommittee Co-Chairs asked that agencies work together again on this concept.

2010

In a time of budget shortfalls, Natural Resource agencies took another 1% cut after seeing a 14% cut in 2009. Fewer natural resource bills were filed or acted on, but agencies have used every opportunity to apply for federal grants under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, receiving authorization to apply and, when awarded, to spend the grant funds.

At the same time, the Integrated Water Resources Strategy (**HB 3369** from 2009) has begun its work with a League member as part of the Policy Advisory Group and the state League a sponsor of the first Open Houses.

2011

With a major recession causing limited revenues for all services, Natural Resource agencies again took a disproportionate hit. The League worked with the Oregon Conservation Network and agency directors to explain the value of these agencies to the economy of Oregon. We testified on almost every agency budget, focusing our testimony on the services the League expects of each agency.

2012

Natural Resource agency budgets received yet another 5-5.5% cuts this session. The League continues to work with others to advocate for enough money for these agencies to process permits adequately and to enforce our laws and rules. The Oregon Conservation Network had as one of its Priorities no more cuts to the Dept. of Environmental Quality budget.

2013

The League took a lead to increase General Funds for natural resource agencies. We provided input during the Governor's budgeting process and signed on to a letter to the Governor with a broad number of advocates. As a result, the Governor's recommended budget included more General Funds for these agencies. Among the programs we supported were those that would implement the Integrated Water Resources Strategy at the Water Resources Dept. (**SB 5547**), Dept. of Environmental Quality (**SB 5520**), Oregon Fish and Wildlife, including support for marine reserves funding (**HB 5013**), Dept. of Agriculture (**SB 5502**) and Dept. of Forestry (**SB 5521**). The Oregon Business Development Dept.'s budget authorized \$1.5 million for water projects. Bonding for other projects were included in **SB 5506** and **5507**. The Columbia River Gorge Commission budget was enhanced although the State of Washington did not support the amount the State of Oregon wanted. Total general funds increased from \$129 million in 2011 to \$165 million in 2013.

2014

The League continued work on funding natural resources agencies. We helped develop a Common Budget Statement with other members of the Oregon Conservation Network. Most natural resource agencies had 25% of the 2% hold back on budgets returned to their budgets. This was seen as a victory since these agencies continue to be underfunded.

2015

The League participated in developing natural resource agency budgets and joined with partners of the Oregon Conservation Network (OCN) in presenting budget letters advocating for specific programs in each agency budget. OCN now has as a standard “priority”, assuring adequate funding for these agencies and has hired a staff person to specifically work on budget issues. The League also provided specific letters to the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources on each budget. With the exception of the Department of Land Conservation and Development, we were successful. (See specific areas below for details.) The League serves on a number of natural agency stakeholder groups and the Governor’s Office to help develop budgets and policies for these agencies.

The League supported **HB 3315** that requires the Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) to calculate costs for services provided to other agencies so that those costs can be allocated to the appropriate agency budget. We worked with others on **HB 2402**, a Task Force to consider future funding for ODFW and rebalance the funding for their mission to include more conservation. The League encouraged the Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife to implement **HB 3315** and set up a program to better understand the variety of work done by ODFW staff.

The League supported **SB 952** that would have created a Task Force on all Natural Resource Agencies, but that bill did not leave Committee.

2016

The League continues to be a member of the Oregon Conservation Network and worked with others on a budget letter for Natural Resource Agencies. We continue to participate in agency budget development for the 2017 session. OCN has sent preliminary letters in April to agencies on our funding and program priorities. We have met with other agency stakeholders to continue to influence agency budget requests to the Governor and will continue that work as the Governor prepares her budget for 2017.

2017

The League continues to be a member of the Oregon Conservation Network and testified with others in opposition to **SB 1052**, a bill that would have required new or increased fees adopted by state agencies would not become effective unless approved by Legislative Assembly by law. Natural resource agencies rely on fees, some of which are allowed to be approved by their Boards or Commissions after public hearings.

Waiting for legislative approval before implementation (instead of approval after the fact as is law today), would hamper their legislative missions since fees are often 50% of some agency budgets.

The League provided testimony on natural resource agency budgets:

- **SB 5537**, the budget for the Dept. of State Lands. We support protection of wetlands, of our waters of the state (including addressing the Portland Harbor Superfund Site cleanup), of our public lands (in particular keeping the Elliott State Forest in public ownership) and support for the South Slough National Estuarine Area
- **SB 5528**, the budget for the Land Use Board of Appeals, as an efficient and fair mechanism for resolving land use disputes
- **HB 5028**, the budget for the Oregon Parks and Recreation Dept. in support of limited fee increases while assuring that everyday Oregonians can still access our parks as well as expressing concern about limited dollars to purchase new parkland as it may become available and support for the Scenic Waterways program
- **SB 5542**, the budget for the Water Resources Dept. Our focus included funding for measurement, data collection, staffing, continued support for Place-Based Planning, additional groundwater studies and dam safety
- **SB 5527**, the budget for the Dept. of Land Conservation and Development. We supported more staff help that could assist multiple communities over grant funds, coastal resilience mitigation planning, update the climate change adaptation framework and, importantly, a staffer to help with housing issues.
- **SB 5518**, the Dept. of Environmental Quality budget. We supported their base budget, funding for their Air Quality program (including implementation of Cleaner Air Oregon and diesel emissions), water quality policies, beginning to fund a new electronic data management system, climate change implementation, continuing the onsite septic loan program and support of land quality (including oil spill prevention)
- **HB 5011**, the budget for the Dept. of Geology and Mineral Industries. We supported increased funding of LIDAR to provide data for hazards and tsunami planning and linkages among natural resources agencies within this budget
- **SB 5502**, the budget for the Dept. of Agriculture. We focused on support for Integrated Water Resources work, the importance of saving agricultural lands for ag production, but were concerned with the reduction in funding for the Invasive Species Council

- **HB 5010**, the budget for the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Dept. We supported additional General Funds to supplement license fees in order to address implementation of the Oregon Conservation Plan, additional monies to implement the Integrated Water Resources Strategy (including instream flow biologists) and monies to continue work on coastal issues such as Marine Reserves and ocean acidification
- **SB 5519**, the budget for the Dept. of Forestry. We supported Stewardship Foresters since they assure enforcement of the Oregon Forest Practices Act, completion of the Forest Electronic Notification System, and funding for public funding for the public benefits of our State Forests. Although each budget passed separately, at the end of session
- **SB 1067** passed that directs each agency to reduce their budgets by 5%, but they have flexibility in how they meet that target. We did receive some budget buy-backs in the end of session in **HB 5006**, but again the natural resource agency budgets only received about 2% of the General Fund/Lottery Funds.

On April 18, after individual agency budgets were heard, we provided general testimony to the Ways and Means Co-Chairs and Natural Resource Subcommittee Co-Chairs to encourage that they not look at these agency budgets in silos, but as connected means to collective goals.

2018

The League supported portions of **HB 5201** and **SB 5702** so DEQ could continue working to replace/upgrade their IT system. DEQ received the funding. We advocated for monies to WRD to fund an additional groundwater basin study. That request was not approved.

The League opposed **Ballot Measure 104** in part because our natural resource agencies depend on fees paid by permittees to help fund processing of permits and/or protecting our clean air, water and other natural resources. We worked with other stakeholders and natural resource agencies as they developed their 2019 budget proposals. We worked with our partners, the Oregon Conservation Network, to provide input to the Governor as she developed her 2019 budget.

2019

During session, we provided testimony on many of the 14 natural resource agency individual budget bills but were disappointed that we lost some ground on funding since 2017.

The League advocated for many budget and staffing increases in the Dept. of Environmental Quality budget (**HB 5017 & 5018**) that were funded. The budget included a substantial increase in staffing and funds for the water quality program which the League has worked to achieve for the last four years. **HB 5018** approved a fee schedule for the Cleaner Air Oregon program. We also supported funding to continue to adopt a new Environmental Data Management System (in **HB 5005**) that will provide access to important data not only to DEQ but other agencies and the public.

The League engaged in budget meetings before and during session with the Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife (**SB 5510**). We were most interested in POP 123 for fish biologists to implement the Integrated Water Resources Strategy where 2 of the 4 positions we requested were funded.

We supported a number of programs in the Water Resources Dept. (WRD) budget (**HB 5043**) and were pleased to see monies to fund another groundwater basin study. We also supported the budgets of the Columbia River Gorge Commission (**HB 5009**), **HB 5027** the Dept. of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD), **HB 5028** Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA), **SB 5521** the Oregon State Marine Board, **HB 5002 & 5003** Dept. of Agriculture (DOA), **HB 5019** the Dept. of Forestry, **SB 5527**, the Oregon Parks and Recreation Dept. (OPRD) and **HB 5035** Dept. of State Lands (DSL). There were a number of fee-increase bills for natural resource agency permits and enforcement which the League supported. Most passed. (**HB 2080 & SB 47** for the Marine Board). Other policy bills around wood heating and on-site septic loans did not pass, but monies were added in the final budget bills.

The Governor wanted to restructure the Oregon Dept. of Energy (ODOE) into a Climate Authority. The League supported this effort (**SB 928 & HB 5044**) that failed but did support funding for the 6 agency staff dealing with Hanford that had not been included in the proposed new agency. The ODOE budget (**SB 5545**) passed with those positions continuing. However, the League continues to support the concept of a Climate Authority and look forward to a reintroduction of this concept in the near future.

Of concern is that the Dept. of Geology and Mineral Industries (DOGAMI) only received a one-year budget since they had overspent their previous budget's General Funds (**SB 5511**). This agency's work is very important related to natural hazards science and to regulating mining in Oregon. The agency is so small that they have had fiscal issues in the past. **SB 45**, a fee bill, did not pass.

The League supported **HB 2075** that would have established a Development Readiness Program with \$1.35 million in funding and one staffer at DLCD. Instead, monies were added to **HB 2001** to help with this effort. Monies were also provided to help with HB 2003 work.

We supported **HB 2672** that would have authorized reimbursement of expenses related to the new marijuana industry for the DOA and the WRD. Although the bill did not pass, a budget note was added for the Oregon Liquor Control Commission to work with DOA on how to cover these expenses.

2021 (*revised 2021, Peggy Lynch*)

In 2020, Covid struck the nation. Part of the state economy shut down and the Governor had state agencies reduce their 2019-21 budget approvals by 8%. Because this was the second year of the biennium, it was an effective 16% cut. But, in June, the forecast showed a rebound and the federal government provided significant funding that helped both individuals and businesses. However, lower income households bore the brunt of the recession.

The December Forecast was up 5% but the cost of state government needs an 11% growth. So the Governor's budget reflected an expected \$1.7 billion shortfall while ahs needing to help Oregonians suffering from the Sept. 2020 wildfires. By March the numbers were looking better and the May forecast showed more than \$1 billion additional revenue for the next 3 biennia. The federal government provided yet another round of help with the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Spending of some of that federal money can stretch until 2026. **HB 5006** was the major budget bill of the session and included spending of much of those ARPA dollars.

As in past years, the League is a member of the Oregon Conservation Network (OCN), a coalition of conservation groups. Our Climate Team works w/OCN members as well as the Natural Resource Team. We also have a representative to the Northwest Energy Coalition (NWECC).

The League provided testimony on most of the natural resource budget bills, including **SB 5516/5517**, the DEQ budget bills. We also supported **HB 3372**, a bill that authorizes DEQ to require information on a permit applicant's prior history of compliance with environmental quality laws. Those budget letters were written when we expected cuts so we engaged later in the session to increase funding for many of our priorities. Of significant note is the \$258 million in water programs, staffing and projects!

The Dept. of Geology and Mineral Industries (DOGAMI) budget, **HB 5010**, was passed early in the session after the Governor's Office suggested that the agency's two divisions be moved into other agencies. The League had supported that move, BUT we did not support the loss of a number of staff that would have been cut under the Governor's plan. The League believes that the mission of the Geological Survey and Services division is critical in providing the science needed for natural hazards, among other information. The League actively worked to pass the 2-year budget with the complete DOGAMI staff.

The League provided testimony on **SB 5539**, the budget bill for the Dept. of State Lands where we supported continuing work on the Elliott State Forest, the Portland Superfund Site, work on waterways and wetlands and the transfer of Oregon's Trust Property Program to the State Treasury.

The League provided testimony in support of **SB 5515**, the budget bill for the Oregon Dept. of Energy (ODOE). We focus especially on the small but critical Nuclear Safety and Emergency Preparedness Division. We also asked for a staffer to support the Oregon Global Warming Commission. We were successful with the former but not the latter.

The League supported Policy Option Package 417 in the Oregon Health Authority budget (**HB 5024**) to modernize public health to include the effects of climate change on Oregonians.

The League provided testimony on **HB 5009**, the budget bill for Oregon Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), including support for a new Habitat Division and staff to help with stream flow needs for aquatic creatures.

The League engaged with the House Wildfire Recovery Committee and served on a Work Group and provided testimony in support of **HB 2289** focusing on helping 2020 wildfire victims rebuild. Although this bill did pass, many of the funding requests were included in the end of session budget bill, **HB 5006**.

2022

The League engaged in budget discussions on behalf of natural resources for the 2022 session. With the significant increase in General Fund and federal revenues, the League encouraged spending on climate, on drought and on staffing for these agencies.

The Dept. of Forestry received monies to pay for the 2021 wildfires and was granted a Special Purpose Appropriation to draw on for cash flow as payments from federal sources often takes 2 years to receive but the bills need to be paid for firefighters and other resources when they occur. Among the bills we supported that did not pass was **HB 4060** that would have funded 2-3 staff to help natural resource agencies access federal funds by helping with grants and being aware of various sources in the multitude of federal agencies.

**HB 5202** was the end of session omnibus budget bill where natural resource agencies received significant increases in their budgets. There was new money for drought— related to in-stream needs as well as agriculture. The League also advocated for monies for drinking water and wastewater projects, particularly in rural Oregon, to upgrade these systems, some of which were in **SB 5701**.

2023 (revised Oct. 2023, Peggy Lynch)

The League is a member of the [Oregon Conservation Network](#), a group of now over 40 conservation and environmental organizations who declare "[Priorities for a Healthy Oregon](#)". We often support and oppose bills passed on the input of our partners and the League's positions.

The League followed [HB 3349](#), a bill with an amendment that would have provided \$300,000 each to eight different entities to create "navigators" to help access federal funding. The League was [disappointed](#) that [HB 3349](#), with the [3 amendment](#), was passed to Ways and Means. The bill did not pass.

A new process around budget requests was used this session: Packages of policy bills that had been sent to Ways and Means for funding were created to reduce the need for each bill to be voted on separately. That practice also allowed for controversial policies to be packaged with more benign policies to gain support and passage. (That practice may occur in the future.) See below under Water -- [HB 2010](#), [HB 3409](#) under Climate and [HB 3395](#) for Housing. [HB 3410-2](#), another "package" bill, includes a variety of economic development funds/grant programs, mostly for rural Oregon.

The League provided [testimony](#) in support of the **Columbia River Gorge Commission budget (HB 5008)**.

The League provided [testimony](#) with comments on the Dept. of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) budget ([HB 5018](#)).

The League provided [testimony](#) in support of the Oregon Marine Board budget ([SB 5521](#)).

2024 (revised June 2024, Peggy Lynch)

The League engaged in natural resource agency budget adjustments as noted in separate areas in this document. After the 2024 session, the League began work with partners and with agencies as they prepare their 2025-27 budget requests. The March revenue forecast indicates limited growth while costs of salaries, benefits and services and supplies have increased. Natural resource agencies have been asked to ONLY ask for 1% General Funds above their current service levels. Hard choices are being made. Some agencies need to increase licenses and fees to cover costs. The League is engaged in those discussions.

2025 (revised Sept. 2025, Peggy Lynch)

The League engaged in developing natural resource agency budgets. The Governor limited the agencies to ask for only 1% more than their Current Service Levels unless the Governor specifically requested more. LWVOR provided testimony on the following budget bills:

Dept. of Environmental Quality: [SB 5520](#) League [testimony](#).

**Highlights of DEQ's Legislatively Approved Budget include:**

- Restoration of Water Quality positions that would have been eliminated due to shortfalls of federal funds. These positions will now be funded through the General Fund.
- Protection against cuts to currently filled General Fund positions.
- Authorization of essential fee increases in the Air Contaminant Discharge, Greenhouse Gas Reporting, and Water Quality programs.
- Creation of new positions, using existing funds, in the Cleaner Air Oregon, Materials Management, Water Quality Grants, and Fuel Tank Seismic Stability programs.
- Establishment of an additional Environmental Law Specialist position for the Office of Compliance and Enforcement.
- Creation of three additional positions for the Climate Protection Program, focused on developing new regulations to prevent emissions leakage from energy-intensive and trade-exposed industries.

Dept. of Geology and Mineral Industries (DOGAMI): [HB 5010](#) LWVOR [testimony](#) LWVOR [supported SB 836](#), a bill that significantly increases permit fees for mining related activities. The League engaged in conversations around the fee bill to assure that the agency can have enough staff to support permittees, the general public, the environment and the agency.

Dept. of Land Conservation and Development: [SB 5528](#) LWVOR [testimony](#).

Land Use Board of Appeals: [SB 5529](#) LWVOR [testimony](#).. The Governor signed the bill, but also sent a [signing letter](#) to Legislative Leadership since the budget did NOT include the money for the IT modernization so needed by this agency.

Oregon State Parks and Recreation Dept.: [HB 5026](#) LWVOR [testimony](#) in part to address [comments](#) by the Legislative Fiscal Office. The Legislative Fiscal Office [notes](#) provided comments outlining concerns for the long-term sustainability of OPRD's operational funding. **The League will engage with these budget issues before the 2027 legislative session.**

Dept. of State Lands: [SB 5539](#) LWVOR [testimony](#) in support. We were pleased by the addition of wetlands staff. The League continues to attend the State Land Board meetings due to the breadth of issues governed by that board. We followed the selection of the new agency Director, Kaitlin Lovell and expressed appreciation for the service of former Director Vicki Walker.

Water Resources Dept.: [SB 5543](#) LWVOR [testimony](#) . And the fee bills: [support HB 2808](#) and [support HB 2803](#). The League participated in work groups to address the budget shortfall and seek solutions. [OWRD Budget Summary](#) **Although the Governor signed these bills, she provided a signing letter for both SB 5543 and HB 2803: *Recognizing the resource constraints, however, I am directing the agency to work with my staff to prioritize its efforts in a manner that is achievable and most likely to advance the State's water management goals to meet in-stream and out-of-stream needs.***

Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board: [HB 5039](#). LWVOR [testimony](#).

The Columbia River Gorge Commission saw a 27% budget cut due to the State of Washington's allocation. Each state matches the other for this bi-state commission work.

The League provided comments on the Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife State Wildlife Action Plan. We were pleased to see many of our comments in the final plan adopted.

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# Agriculture

## National Position

2014

The LWVUS adopted a new Statement of Position on Federal Agriculture Policies. This position may be used to address issues in Oregon.

2021 (*revised 2021, Peggy Lynch*)

The League supported **SB 5502**, the agency budget, where we focused on water quality, pesticide issues, addressing climate change and public health and safety. General Funds were increased by 20.3%! We testified in support of overtime pay for farmworkers: **HB 2358**, using our year 2000 farmworker study. The bill did not pass, but provided a forum for future consideration. We provided testimony in support of **SB 583**, a moratorium on Industrial Dairies, but the bill did not pass.

Separately, the Environmental Protection Agency announced it will stop the use of the pesticide chlorpyrifos on all food. (See LWVOR's study: [Pesticides and other Biocides.](#))

2022

The League supported **SB 1534**, a bill supporting Natural and Working Lands and Waters that would have created a voluntary program for carbon sequestration with credits or other help to agriculture interests who chose to participate. The League also provided comments to the Board of Agriculture on our focus for the session around water and climate. We also engaged in issues around the illegal cannabis and hemp grows.

2023

The League [provided a letter](#) to the Board of Agriculture sharing our priorities around climate and water for the 2023 session. We provided a letter on [HB 5002](#), the Dept. of Agriculture's budget. We supported [SB 530](#), the Natural Climate Solutions bill, which was included in [HB 3409](#), the omnibus climate bill, Sections 53-63.

2024 (*revised June 2024, Peggy Lynch*)

The League provided verbal testimony to the Board of Agriculture and shared our 2024 priorities around water and housing and shared the need for infrastructure funds and our support for natural and working lands.

# Air Quality

Adopted May 1968

**The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that all segments of society (government, industry, agriculture and individual citizens) must share responsibility for improved air pollution abatement practices.**

**A. In more specific terms, the League supports:**

- 1. Adequate standards for control of all sources of pollution and strict enforcement of established rules and regulations;**
- 2. A comprehensive, coordinated program for management of air as a natural resource;**
- 3. Adequate financing for air pollution abatement programs;**
- 4. More research to determine causes and effects of air pollution and methods of control, better coordination of research programs, and increased sharing of information.**

**AA. League agrees:**

- 1. Individuals, too, must recognize their responsibility in abatement programs and be willing to accept restrictions on their own activities, particularly with respect to automobiles and backyard burning.**
- 2. Effective public education programs are necessary if the public is to:**
  - a. recognize the seriousness of the problem; and**
  - b. appreciate the necessity to support improved pollution abatement.**
- 7. In general, industry must be prepared to pay the cost of abatement for its own pollution, but members recognize the usefulness of some form of financial incentives:**
  - a. to assist small or distressed industries; and**
  - b. to prevent undue delay in obtaining relief from pollution.**
  - c. The members prefer loans and direct grants over forms of tax relief.**
- 8. Polluters should bear the cost of pollution abatement in proportion to their contribution to the problem. (Actually everyone will pay, whether in taxes, in product cost, or in bearing the consequence of inadequate pollution abatement.)**

**BB. In considering Oregon's relationship with other governmental units, League concludes:**

- 1. Because both the desirable air quality and the problems of pollution vary from one area to another:**
  - a. The state has a right to set higher standards for pollution than those set by the federal government.**
  - b. The state has a responsibility to set higher standards for pollution when local conditions demand it.**

- c. Federal standards in all cases should be recognized as a minimum below which state standards cannot be set.**
- 9. As air pollution does not recognize state boundaries, participation in interstate compacts is desirable in order to control pollution on an airshed basis.**

## Position Implementation- Air Quality

1969

The League successfully supported bills concerned with state matching funds for pollution control facilities, industrial air contaminants sampling program, penalties for disconnecting air pollution control devices in motor vehicles, more controls over field burning, more emphasis on the public interest rather than the economic questions of pollution control, and the requirement that counties establish comprehensive plans for air quality.

1971

The League was involved with over 20 environmental bills, which included successful support to further field burning regulation and a permit system for control of air pollution sources.

1973

The League supported a phased-in ban on backyard burning.

1975

The League supported a successful ban on fluorocarbon-propelled aerosols. League was again active in the fight against the extension of deadlines for the 1975 field burning cutoff. It was one of the most controversial bills of the session. The final version of the bill gave more discretion to the Environmental Quality Commission while providing a four-year phase out of Willamette Valley field burning.

1977-82

The sessions from 1977-1982 were energy-focused years. League worked hard on the Clean Air Act reauthorization by Congress, which was a top priority action item of the LWVUS and LWVOR. Many attempts to weaken the standards were made. The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) ruled in favor of changing the state photochemical oxidant standard to comply with federal standards. The League was

opposed to any weakening. State and local Leagues testified concerning proposed rules to limit sulfur and volatile matter of fuel coal for direct space heating.

1983

This legislative session took a big step forward for Oregon's clean air with passage of woodstove certification (**HB 2235**). This measure was introduced by DEQ as a necessary step to clean air management for Oregon and was supported by the League.

1989

For all the time and effort that was devoted to bills to improve Oregon's air quality, the Legislature ended up with very little to show for it. Efforts to come up with some compromise legislation on both field burning controls and woodstove regulations continued right until the close of the session, but to no avail. Opponents to field burning are continuing their efforts through initiative petitions.

The governor has expressed interest in supporting a petition that would be similar to the version of **SB 425** that the House failed to pass. The League may well find itself involved in another ballot measure campaign.

1991

The Legislature passed **HB 2175** which covers two basic areas: it gives the state authority to implement required portions of the 1990 Federal Clean Air Act amendments and develops new programs to control wood stove emissions. It also introduced vehicle emission fees, which will be used to support mass transit development. This bill originally contained a strong mandate for cleaner air through emission fees. The bill was faced with strong opposition from the powerful industry lobby and the result was a much milder bill but still a step toward a cleaner environment.

1993

The Legislature passed Senate Bill 86 for implementing provisions of the Clean Air Act and charging fees to pay for costs of issuing permits and monitoring compliance.

Some added amendments may weaken the Highest and Best Practicable Treatment for air emission pollutants.

1995

In the Oregon legislative session, little happened to change the way air quality is regulated and monitored by the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). The bill that would have made it more difficult to improve air quality (**HB 2895**) by setting limits on expansion of the boundaries for motor vehicle pollution control system inspections, was killed by a veto.

Governor Kitzhaber also rejected a bill that would have prevented Oregon from establishing stricter environmental controls than those of the federal government. As pointed out in the DEQ's [Air Quality Annual Report 1994](#), Oregon met every Clean Air Act deadline. Overall the air quality has been improving the last few years, especially as to fine particulate pollution.

1999

To meet the requirements of the federal Clean Air Act, **HB 2180**, "Representational Standing for TITLE V Air Permits", was passed. The bill was a result of an EPA "deficiency notice" because Oregon does not allow third parties to legally challenge DEQ actions on these federally delegated permits. The League unsuccessfully lobbied for third party rights for all federally delegated programs, such as the Clean Water Act. The governor once again vetoed a bill that would have made it more difficult to control air quality by setting limits on the boundaries for motor vehicle pollution control programs.

2000

In a joint statement to the Columbia Gorge Commission, LWVOR and LWVWA opposed the elimination of two provisions requiring study of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area for Class I air shed designation.

2001

A major battle developed in the 2001 legislative session over the extension of "Pollution Facility Tax Credits." These credits were originally designed to ease existing plants into the new federal Clean Water and Clean Air requirements. They have come to include tax credits for reductions in emissions in air, water, noise, solid waste, and hazardous waste – whether or not existing law requires such reductions! The final legislation (SB 764) phased down the tax credit percentage and established a future category with a different tax percentage for new facilities complying with existing law. LWVOR fought hard to sunset this tax program.

2003

The battle continued over "pollution facility tax credits." A coalition effort to reduce these exemptions, deductions, exclusions, and credits failed to off-set the predicted state shortfall in revenue for 2003-05. **HB 3652** actually expanded the definition as well as the portion of pollution control facilities' costs eligible for the tax credit. The tax credit (currently allowed for air, water, noise pollution, waste reduction and disposal of used oil) now includes feed lots and certain land management systems.

Business energy tax credits were expanded [see [Energy Conservation](#)]. The sunset date was extended to 2006. LWVOR opposed HB 3652.

2005

What began as a budget note, ended as an amendment to DEQ's budget. The amendment prohibited DEQ from spending any funds on implementation of California auto emission standards (stricter than EPA standards). The League opposed the amendment. The Governor "line-item" vetoed the amendment. Washington State's passage of the California standards was contingent on Oregon passing the same.

The goal of reduction of global warming gases was attacked by the amendment to the DEQ budget above and also by a House (only) Resolution, which the League opposed. It prohibited Oregon from imposing standards stricter in the control of greenhouse gases than those required by the federal government. The League opposes such "stringency" restrictions.

2007

The League, working with the Oregon Conservation Network, continued to work to have air quality enforcement under DEQ. SB 235 was passed which compromised on this matter related to agriculture uses.

Oregon's nearly 40-year-old "Pollution Tax Credits" statutes will expire December 2007, a victory for the League and Oregon. A bill which would have removed this "sunset" date and "enhanced" the tax credit failed.

2009

The League supported SB 528, which addressed the issue of air quality and health concerns surrounding field burning in the Willamette Valley. A compromise was reached that reduces field burning acreage in 9 counties and provides for the Department of Environmental Quality to administer this law. Open field burning will be banned by 2010 with few exceptions. This is a victory for League members who have worked for years on this important health issue.

2010

The League provided testimony to the Department of Environmental Quality on mercury emissions at a cement plant in Durkee, requesting that actions be required to reduce the very high emissions level.

Portland General Electric announced that it would close the Boardman coal plant by 2020. The cost of complying with the Dept. of Environmental Quality's air quality standards was greater than replacing this plant with a natural gas-fired facility.

A disappointment was passage of **HB 3674** that included a section allowing the Covanta municipal solid waste plant to receive renewable energy credits since the plant's emissions are an air pollutant. The League had requested that the Governor veto **HB 2940** (2009) on this

2011

See Solid Waste comments on **HB 3597** since the process for plastics conversion may also affect air quality.

2012

**HB 4112** only received a hearing and did not pass. The League opposed **HB 4112** that would have stopped vehicle inspections in the Portland and Medford air sheds. It would have harmed businesses that might need air quality permits and shifted the burden from individual vehicles to these businesses to meeting the Clean Air Act.

2013

**SB 306** funds an evaluation of ways to price pollution to improve air quality. The League provided comments to the Department of Environmental Quality regarding proposed rules revisions supporting regulation of small sources of air pollution.

2015

The League commented on **HB 5018**, the Dept. of Environmental Quality budget, in support of their air quality program funding. Our support of **SB 324**, Clean Fuels, also addresses air quality.

2016

Local Leagues from Marion Polk to Clackamas and Portland are following the pending Metro decision on whether or not to send its trash to the Covanta plant in Keiser to burn rather than continue shipping trash through the Columbia Gorge to Arlington.

The League is monitoring the work of DEQ and the Oregon Health Authority as they spend the \$2.5 million authorized by the Legislature in 2016 to expand its Oregon Air Toxics Program. We provided comments to the Cleaner Air Oregon Advisory Committee to help frame potential regulatory rules. We are working with the DEQ and others to address Air Quality statewide, including following a Woodsmoke Work Group and new Clean Air Oregon rulemaking efforts, as well as Clean Diesel work.

2017

The League supported **HB 2236** that would have funded the concept of “Cleaner Air Oregon” to enact new regulations for air quality grounded in science, based on data and health based. The bill did not pass. However, the League also provided testimony to an Air Quality Rulemaking Committee of the Dept. of Environmental Quality and continues to work to support health-based regulations.

We supported **HB 2269**, a fee bill on air quality permit holders and would have provided funding to stand up Cleaner Air Oregon. It died in Ways and Means. The League supported **SB 1008**, a bill that would have addressed health concerns around diesel engines. The DEQ budget did allow a \$73 million settlement from Volkswagen to be used to upgrade or replace diesel engines in school buses. The League continues to provide input into draft rules around Cleaner Air Oregon. In December, the League provided substantive comments to DEQ and OHA on the latest Cleaner Air Oregon draft rules.

2018

**SB 1541**, a compromise fee bill to implement the Cleaner Air Oregon program passed, with fees and some General Funds for both DEQ and the Oregon Health Authority. DEQ also received General Funds to process the current backlog of air quality permits.

The Environmental Quality Commission adopted the new rules to implement the Cleaner Air Oregon program that the League commented on in 2017.

2019

We continue to follow the Cleaner Air Oregon (CAO) process. The CAO program has hired permanent staff and begun implementation. It is now assessing new facilities and is working with eight of the first twenty existing facilities initially identified for evaluation. DEQ will now conduct a more in-depth analysis to determine whether these called-in facilities pose health risks and if their air permits should be revised. The agency will call in the remaining facilities from Group 1 by April 2020, with Group 2 facilities to follow over the course of the next year.

In September, the DEQ and the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) furthered the process of assigning more protective health standards to toxic pollutants expected to have developmental or other severe human health effects. They were charged with providing input for how to set Oregon’s Hazard Index benchmarks for reducing non-cancer health risks from industrial sources of toxic air contaminants. There is a process going forward that will result in rule adoption in early 2020.

**HB 2007**, the “Dirty Diesel” bill, became effective on August 9. The League worked behind the scenes to move this bill. Although weakened so that it applies only to trucks registered in Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington counties, it is a step toward reducing diesel pollution and bringing Oregon more in line with the regulations in California and Washington. The DEQ is working on completing the rulemaking timelines for implementing the new legislation. The first engine phase-out deadline is Jan. 1, 2023. Again, the DEQ is hampered by underfunding, as a prior budget study showed they would need six new positions to implement the program. Instead, they were granted only two.

The DEQ asked for a modest revision of the fees for the Vehicle Inspection Program (VIP), the first increase in over twenty years. The DEQ was requesting a fee increase to

\$25. It did not pass. In November, the DEQ is planning to ask the Oregon Environmental Quality Commission to adopt the new fees, which could then be ratified by the legislature in February.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed a rule to implement the clear language of the Clean Air Act that allows a “major source” of hazardous air pollutants (HAP) to reclassify as an “area source” after acting to limit emissions to below the levels that define major sources. LWVUS and LWVOR are opposed to this roll-back of air quality rules.

## 2020

**HB 4024** would prohibit certain products that use or contain hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) from commerce in Oregon after a certain date. The League [supported](#) and the bill passed the policy committee and Ways and Means but died at end of session.

**SB 5702** approves a fee increase for vehicle inspections. The League has consistently [approved](#) these increases as a means to both address air quality and to assure that metro areas stay under the air pollution cap so businesses can grow in these areas. The fees are required to be approved by the legislature and went directly to Ways and Means. It passed but the bill died at the end of session due to the walkout.

The League had a member attending the Dept. of Environmental Quality Air Quality stakeholders’ meetings on behalf of LWVOR. Among the issues being discussed is how to address wood smoke pollution, especially in the Portland Metro area (as well as Oakridge and Klamath Falls areas) due to their dangerous air particulates.

**HB 4049** would have allowed the Covanta trash burning facility to receive renewable energy certificates. The League is adamantly opposed and worked with others to defeat the bill. The bill was moved without recommendation to House Rules where it died.

The League provided testimony to the Dept. of Environmental Quality rulemaking committee in support of the Air Contaminant Discharge Permit Fee Increase.

## 2021 *(revised 2021, Peggy Lynch)*

DEQ and the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) collaborated to align the Cleaner Air Oregon program with the 2003 Oregon Air Toxics program. We also followed the Air Contaminant Discharge Permits (ACDP). We followed the rulemaking from **HB 2007** (2019) on reducing

diesel emissions. The EQC adopted rules to establish a new diesel retrofit compliance program in 2021. The League provided testimony in support of **HB 2814A** to address dangerous diesel hotspots not covered by the 2019 bill. The bill did not pass but **HB 5006** provided money to work on this issue. We also provided testimony in support of **HB 2674** that could have created a Clean Diesel Fund. It did not pass either.

Wildfire smoke was an air quality concern. **HB 2571** passed requiring a study of liability for prescribed burns and **SB 762**, the omnibus wildfire bill, passed with League support. It contains monies and direction related to smoke management. DEQ continues to focus on reducing the use of wood stoves for heating due to the health damage of small particulates.

HB 3269 directed the Dept. of Environmental Quality to study and develop strategies to fund its Emergency Response Program. The League provided [testimony](#) in support. The bill passed committee but died in Ways and Means.

2022

The League continues to follow the Cleaner Air Oregon program and continue to comment on rules changes. As a positive, the program now focuses on assuring high risk communities are protected. The League continues to be frustrated by the lack of materials ahead of time for rulemaking meetings. Diesel emissions continue to be a focus for DEQ and for the League.

2023 (revised Oct. 2023, Peggy Lynch)

The League supported [HB 3229](#) to increase Title V fees and Policy Option Package of DEQ's budget bill [HB 5018](#) to assure polluters pay for the Title V permitting program.

2025 (Rev. Sept. 2025 Peggy Lynch)

The League joined with others to [oppose HB 2642](#) and support DEQ's authority to protect air quality by keeping with them the power to implement vehicle emission testing. This has been a long-standing position of LWVOR.

The League followed [SB 726](#), a bill that requires the owner or operator of a municipal solid waste landfill located in Benton County (known as Coffin Butte Landfill) to conduct surface emissions monitoring and report data on methane. The bill was narrowed significantly as it went through the legislative process. Although LWVOR did not provide testimony, we followed the bill because our Corvallis League had a special interest in the bill and landfills in the Willamette Valley are continuing to close or have a variety of violations. Also passed was [HB 3794](#), creating a Task Force on Municipal Solid Waste in the Willamette Valley.

## Climate Change

### National Position

**Climate Change: The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that global climate change is a man-made phenomenon that threatens the integrity of our ecosystem. The League supports the preservation of the physical, chemical and biological integrity of the ecosystem and maximum protection of public health and the environment. The League supports: energy goals and policies that acknowledge the United States as a responsible member of the world community through sound use of energy resources and a predominant reliance on renewable resources. The League believes that policy makers must take into account the ramifications of their decisions on the nation as a whole as well as on other nations.**

### **March 1, 2019: LWVUS Includes Climate Change Position in Impact on Issues**

#### **LWVUS Climate Change Position: New in March 2019**

The League believes that climate change is a serious threat facing our nation and planet. The League believes that an interrelated approach to combating climate change—including through energy conservation, air pollution controls, building resilience, and promotion of renewable resources—is necessary to protect public health and defend the overall integrity of the global ecosystem. The League supports climate goals and policies that are consistent with the best available climate science and that will ensure a stable climate system for future generations. Individuals, communities, and governments must continue to address this issue, *while considering the ramifications of their decision, at all levels—local, state, regional, national, and global.*

**June 2016: LWVOR Council Resolution adopted:**

LWVOR supports aggressive efforts to restore balance to the planet's climate systems by reducing the atmospheric carbon dioxide to 350 parts per million (ppm), the upper safe limit. The target set by scientists requires an immediate 8% global greenhouse gas emissions annually; in conjunction with carbon dioxide storage through mass reforestation, and soil management. Further, we support transitioning off of fossil fuels to alternative forms of energy: wind, hydroelectric, wave, tidal, geothermal, and solar; and prioritizing a just transition to all Americans.

**June 2016: LWVUS Convention passed 3 resolutions submitted by LWVOR:**

LWVUS consider signing onto an Amicus Brief with the 21 youth plaintiffs from Our Children's Trust;

LWVUS support the United States ratification of the UN COP 21 Paris Agreement;

LWVUS should continue working for full implementation of the EPA Clean Power Plan, especially at the state level, as a first step, and should call on the White House to implement an updated science-based Climate Action Plan that stabilizes global warming by bringing CO2 levels down to no more than 350 ppm by 2100.

**May 2018: LWVOR Council adopted a Climate Test Resolution during Council:**

The League of Women Voters supports Climate Test, an assessment tool to help ensure that energy policies align with climate science. The Climate Test uses the latest climate science to evaluate proposed energy policies and projects in light of the globally-agreed goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees C, informed by the successful spirit of global cooperation as affirmed in the UN COP 21 Paris Agreement.

**June 2018: LWVUS Convention adopted the following two resolutions at their Convention:**

**Climate Test:** The League of Women Voters supports a set of climate assessment criteria that ensures that energy policies align with current climate science.

These criteria require that the latest climate science be used to evaluate proposed energy policies and major projects in light of the globally-agreed-upon goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees C, informed by the successful spirit of global cooperation as affirmed in the UN COP 21 Paris Agreement.

**Price on Carbon:** The League of Women Voters stands united with, and in support of, efforts to price carbon emissions, whether cap-and-trade, carbon tax/fee, or another viable pricing mechanism. The League does not have a position on how the revenue generated is to be used. We do not espouse any single method of pricing carbon over another. We will evaluate all proposed

methods based on their effectiveness to abate emissions and whether the method can be successfully implemented.

***May 2019: LWVOR convention adopted the first state League Climate Emergency resolution.***

This resolution encourages local Leagues to consider advocating their municipalities (jurisdictions) to declare actionable Climate Emergency declarations. As of Nov 6 2019, globally more than 1180 municipalities have passed binding resolutions and seven other state leagues have now approved similar Climate Emergency declaration resolutions)

See other Natural Resources positions and actions on 1) **Hazardous waste** (Fossil fuel related storage, processing or transportation via pipeline, highway or waterway) 2) **100 year Water Vision** and 3) other related state managed **Climate Adaptation policy** topics. See **Energy** for energy efficiency and renewable energy policy. See **Governance** for Immigration and Social Policy for Refugee funding.

## Position Implementation—Climate Change

2009

The League used the League of Women Voters of the United States' position on natural resources to "Promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest." as our basis for testifying on many bills related to energy and climate change. Our position on climate change states that "Global climate change is one of the most serious threats to the environment, health and economy of our nation. Recent scientific studies show that global warming is already causing environmental changes that will have significant global economic and social impacts.

The League believes that now is the time to act on global climate change. We can reduce global warming pollution by using existing technologies to make power plants and factories more efficient, make cars go farther on a gallon of gasoline, and shift to cleaner technologies."

The League testified in support of **HB 2186** to implement specific goals to reduce carbon emissions in the transportation sector. This legislation authorizes the Environmental Quality Commission (EQC) to adopt a Low Carbon Fuel Standard to reduce greenhouse gas emissions per unit of fuel energy by 10 percent over the next decade. The bill specifies ways to maintain parts and tires for efficiency and cut unnecessary ship idling at ports.

The bill also creates a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Greenhouse Gas Emissions Task Force focused on the state's six MPOs to study ways to integrate lower emission standards into transportation and land use decisions and to provide a report recommending legislation by January 2010. League members will monitor this effort as the issue also crosses into our Land Use position.

**HB 2001**, a major transportation bill, included a requirement for Metro to integrate lower emission standards into transportation and land use decisions.

**SB 34** slightly increases the employer payroll tax to expand the Portland and Eugene mass transit systems. The League wrote letters saying that mass transit conserves energy and lowers emissions by reducing congestion and allows people with few options a means to commute. **SB 38** creates a registry to report emissions for companies that import, distribute or sell electricity or fossil fuels from out-of-state. This expands existing rules that require companies to provide data on in-state global warming emissions.

**SB 101** sets a greenhouse gas emission performance standard for power plants and prohibits utilities from building new coal fired power plants, extending the life of existing ones, or signing new contracts from out-of-state sources that use coal.

**SB 80**, the centerpiece of the climate package to reduce emissions in different sectors, was amended so significantly at the request of the state's largest polluters that the bill died.

A number of climate and energy bills have corresponding fiscal strategies so natural resource volunteers needed to follow Revenue and Ways and Means Committees as well. And we worked with our Governance and Social Policy partners to be sure that tax credits supporting new technology didn't reduce revenue for other important public service needs. Besides being good for the environment, another question we asked was: "Will this credit generate more revenue or do more good in the long term for Oregon?"

The League will continue to work with partners at the Oregon Conservation Network and Healthy Climate Partnership to address climate change and policies to reduce greenhouse gases during the interim.

2010

The League provided testimony on the Land Conservation and Development Commission's work plan to encourage a focus on climate change.

We provided oral testimony to a Task Force in support of what is now **SB 1059** to assure that the public is involved in the conversation. Passage of **SB 1059** will help in creating healthy, climate friendly communities in five of our Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) areas of the state (Salem, Corvallis, Eugene, Medford and Bend).

The bill requires the Oregon Department of Transportation to develop a state strategy for reducing greenhouse gasses in the transportation sector while the Department of Land Use and Transportation will set targets for reduction. Both will help create a toolkit for these MPOs to use in land use and transportation planning. A section of the bill requires that a public education plan be developed to help these MPOs. Funding will be needed in 2011 in order to require MPO action.

By including the Covanta municipal solid waste plant in **HB 3674**, allowing them to receive renewable energy credits (RECs), our Renewable Portfolio Standard requiring 25% of our energy to be provided by clean, renewable energy sources by 2025 is diluted. RECs can be used to comply with that Standard.

2011

Most bills addressing climate change received little or no action. The League and others played defense in order to protect the policies currently in place.

2013

The 2013 Global Warming Commission's report to the Legislature gives Oregon a C+ for its progress towards Oregon's carbon emissions reduction goals for 2030. The report calls for reductions in emissions from "cars" and from "coal" to bend the curve of carbon emissions down. From other reports, the foundational strategy (1999 to present) of holding emissions from power delivery flat by meeting 50% of load growth with energy efficiency and 50% with renewable energy, is succeeding.

The League testified in support of **SB 536**, which allows state agencies to install stations for charging electric cars under certain conditions and quietly supported a bill which required condominiums to allow resident installation of charging stations (**HB 3301**). The League submitted testimony in support of **SB 488**, which proposed to remove the sunset from the Clean Fuels Standard (League supported-2009). **SB 488** did not pass and is expected to be reintroduced in the 2014 short session. The League was neutral on **HB 2435**, which exempts some diesel fuels from the fuel excise tax that funds our highway system, and quietly supportive of a common sense bill to exempt emergency fuel supplies from containing biodiesel.

The League also quietly supported **SB 242A** and **SB 844A**, which passed. **SB 844** originally allowed all investor owned utilities to seek approval for investments that would benefit ratepayers and simultaneously reduce carbon emissions. **SB 844A** was substantially narrowed (to apply only to natural gas utilities). **SB 242A** clarified that **SB 101** (2009), which disallowed power generation technologies that emit above an established standard, applies to any new plant or new contract serving Oregon load rather than just plants operating in Oregon. Interestingly, **SB 242A** also allows the carbon standard of 1100 pounds/MWh to be challenged by petition to the Public Utility Commission. **HB 2274** (which constrained greenhouse gas reporting) was dead on arrival in Committee

(see [Energy](#) for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Legislation updates)

2014

The League worked with others to improve **HB 4111** related to public-private investment of public infrastructure. Climate changes will require important infrastructure projects but we need to be sure that taxpayers are protected in any such partnership. The League supported prioritizing projects that address climate change mitigation. See also [Fiscal Policy](#).

2015

The League testified to the Oregon Transportation Commission and objected to a specific project (Port of St. Helens Berth 2) that was requesting funding under Connect Oregon V because of its potential link to exporting fossil fuels. Funding for that project was denied. We did support projects that would provide alternative transportation choices for Oregonians.

The League worked with others in the Oregon Conservation Network in support of **HB 3470**, the Climate Stability and Justice Act, which would have required the Environmental Quality Commission to adopt, by rule, statewide greenhouse gas emissions limits every five years. It did not pass, but we expect a like bill to be introduced in 2016 and/or 2017. The League also joined a new climate coalition: Renew Oregon.

We supported **SB 477** with -1 amendment that would have required electric utilities to transition from coal to renewable energy sources. It did not pass but this goal is now part of the Renew Oregon coalition. We supported **SB 324**, deleting the sunset clause on the Clean Fuels program which passed. We expect to have to defend that legislation at the ballot in 2016. We opposed **HB 2281B** that would have repealed Clean Fuels. We supported **HB 3415** to place a 10-year moratorium on hydraulic fracturing.

The bill was amended to only require a study, losing League support. (See [Hazardous Materials](#) on oil train safety for info on **SB 262** and **SB 271**.)

The League watched a number of carbon tax or other bills addressing carbon and climate change, none of which passed this session: **HB 2082**, **HB 2447**, **2729**.

We supported **HB 5027**, the Dept. of Land Conservation and Development budget, to continue Metropolitan Planning Organization's work to reduce greenhouse gas reductions and do rulemaking on natural hazards planning due to expected changes in weather that will increase landslides, coastal erosion, etc. These packages were not funded. (See also [Land Use](#).)

We supported LWV PDX as they supported a City resolution opposing the increase of crude oil-carrying trains (passed) and a resolution opposing expansion of infrastructure whose primary purpose is transporting or storing fossil fuels in the City or adjacent waterways League members serve on the Healthy Climate Partnership group and the League joined with a newly formed Renew Oregon group focused on addressing climate change.

## 2016

The League supported **SB 1574**, the Healthy Climate bill (updated from **HB 3470** of 2015). Although the bill did not pass, the 2016 budget bill (**SB 5701**) included \$230,000 from the General Fund to DEQ to provide information on how a market-based carbon reduction system would work in Oregon. We also supported **HB 4036** and **SB 1547**, duplicate filings of the Clean Energy and Coal Transition bill. **SB 1547** passed with significant amendments.

The League joined a new climate coalition, Renew Oregon, to continue to support bills that address climate change. We have long been a member of the Healthy Climate Partnership, a group that discusses climate issues year-round.

LWVOR on March 3, joined other organizations and signed onto Our Children's Trust lawsuit against the State of Oregon via an amicus brief. Our Children's Trust lawsuit could force Oregon to take a more aggressive stance against the carbon emissions warming the earth and destroying the environment by acknowledging that the Public Trust Doctrine applies to air as well as land and water.

The LWVOR Board adopted and 2016 LWVOR Council supported a Resolution to LWVUS stressing the urgency of addressing climate change with aggressive efforts to restore balance to the planet's climate system by reducing the atmospheric carbon dioxide to 350 parts per million (ppm), the upper safe limit no later than 2100. (See above)

LWVOR sent a five-page letter to the Oregon Global Warming Commission and copied the Governor and Legislative Leadership, which requested that the Oregon Greenhouse Gas Emission Targets and Climate Change Plans be updated to reflect current science and the basic framework/recovery plan specified in Our Children's Trust state and federal lawsuits—returning to 350 PPM Co2 by 2100.

LWVUS and LWVOR, in joint standing, submitted to the U.S. District Court an amicus brief in the *Juliana* case, making LWVUS the first national organization to do so. The amicus brief uniquely recognized that judicial involvement is necessary to safeguard the fundamental rights of underrepresented individuals when the other branches have failed them.

2017

The League worked with partners and provided testimony in support of **HB 2135** and **SB 557**, bills that would set up a cap and invest (Clean Energy Jobs) program in Oregon. They did not pass, but **SB 1070** was submitted at the end of session with the intent of continuing work to submit a new bill in 2018, which the League asked local Leagues and members to help support.

We supported **HB 2711**, a bill that would have placed a 10-year moratorium on hydraulic fracturing. It passed the House but died in the Senate.

We supported **HB 2020** (with funding) to merge the Dept of Energy with the Oregon Global Warming Commission. Although there was a bipartisan bicameral committee that worked during the interim to address the need to have a focused agency on climate change, this bill (along with others with similar goals) did not move forward.

We supported **HB 3343**, a bill that would create a “climate test” requiring qualifying fossil fuel infrastructure project proposals be subject to an environmental impact statement (EIS) with full lifecycle accounting of a project's greenhouse gas emissions, coupled with an economic analysis that will show whether a project is viable in a world where climate goals are met.

**HB 2017**, the omnibus transportation bill, passed. It included elements which the League supported, including additional monies for statewide public transit. This is good for both the land use program and climate change.

LWVUS and LWV Oregon jointly filed a federal 'Juliana v. United States' [amicus brief](#) arguing that (1) it is the proper role of the District Court to serve as a check and balance on the political branches of government, (2) the urgency of the case justifies proceeding directly to trial, and (3) the District Court properly recognized the youth plaintiffs' standing in bringing the case. The League brief is one of eight amicus briefs, including those from legal scholars, legal nonprofits, and religious, women's, libertarian, and environmental groups filed in support of the plaintiffs.

In late 2017, in her *Juliana v. United States* ruling, U.S. District Court Judge Aiken introduced "[The Right to a Stable Climate](#)" as a Constitutional Question

The League joined in the People's Climate March, both nationally and locally. League members around the state marched to influence a movement to implement critical climate policy.

As an LWV United Nations observer, an LWVOR Action Committee member attended the COP 23 U.S. Climate conference in Bonn, Germany.

2018

The League continued their partnership with Renew Oregon in support of a cap and invest bill. We supported **HB 1507** and **SB 4001**, but neither passed. However, Leadership in the Senate and House appointed a new Joint Committee on Carbon Reduction to develop new policy proposals for the 2019 session and the Governor created a new Climate Cabinet to coordinate work across agencies and created a new Carbon Policy Office within her office. **HB 5201** provided \$1.6 million to provide for the additional staffing and additional Carbon Price Studies and data collection. The League has created a team of volunteers to follow the many aspects of climate policy and participated in a mini lobby day at the Capital in September.

The League provided comments related to a number of bills that would have created a new Oregon Energy Board (**SB 1519** and **SB 1537**, with specific testimony on **HB 4148**). They did not pass but there is expectation that a new structure may be considered in 2019.

LWVOR joined four local Leagues in opposition to a Dept. of Environmental Quality permit application for the Jordan Cove Energy Project (JCEP) because it did not adequately address the environmental, economic and cultural impacts, nor did they provide adequate justification to support approval. JCEP withdrew their application (in part due to over 42,000 comments provided to opponents of the permit), but immediately resubmitted a new permit request.

During the year, the Governor declared a drought in a number of Oregon counties. By the end of the year, the entire state was in some stage of drought.

The Dept. of Land Conservation and Development received federal monies to update the 2010 Climate Change Adaptation Framework. (See also [Land Use](#))

League members continue following the Oregon Global Warming Commission and Our Children's Trust state and federal lawsuits with formal amici standings.

Two LWVOR members attended the December U.N. COP 24 Climate Change Paris Agreement Update in Katowice, Poland and contributed to the first League U.N. COP press release and staffed the first League U.N. COP booth.

2019

**LWVUS joined 600 groups to support bold climate action** via Congressional Legislation to Address the Urgent Threat of Climate Change in January. The League urged Congress to consider the League's [principles](#) as the 116th Congress debated climate change legislation. We did not endorse specific legislation and not all of the stated principles of our partners are consistent with League positions, but a bold agenda to address climate change is necessary to protect our country and our planet. LWVUS published [Green New Deal talking points in March](#).

For the fourth year the League continued our partnership with OCN and Renew Oregon in support of a cap (Green House Gas Emissions) and invest bill. We supported **HB 2020** which passed the House. Senate Republicans used a rare Legislative process and chose to block a required quorum by leaving the state for 10 days. The Senate chose not to bring up the bill when they returned for the last two days of session, so the bill did not pass

In July 2019, Governor Brown committed to executive orders that could provide additional incentives. (The League understands that all parties would prefer a legislative solution.)

The League supported **HB 2623**, which imposes a five-year moratorium on hydraulic fracturing ("fracking") for oil and gas development statewide. **HB 2209**, the Oil Rail Safety bill, passed, which focused on response planning to spills and minimal liability requirements, not on prevention, and only covered oil via rail on specific high hazardous routes. Given these major issues the League stayed neutral all session.

**SB 451A** a bill related to Renewable Energy Credits focused on the Covanta waste burning facility in Keiser, The League submitted testimony, with eight other organizations, in opposition. This bill would have allowed ratepayer money meant to incentivize development of clean energy to instead subsidize trash incineration. The bill passed the Senate but died without a vote in the House.

**HB 2250**, the Oregon Environmental Protection Act passed. It requires Oregon to continue to support the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts as of January 2017. The League was in support. LWVOR also supported **SJM 7**: a Green New Deal Resolution, urging bold action to address the threats of climate change. The bill died in committee. LWVOR supported **SB 928**, to create a: Climate Authority state agency. The bill was part of Governor Brown's Carbon Policy package published in Nov 2018 and interrelated to HB2020. It died in committee. LWVOR opposed **SB 508** which would have changed the definition of Renewable Portfolio Standard. The bill died in committee.

Jordan Cove Energy Project: The League continued to provide support to the four local Leagues (LLs)—Coos Bay, Umpqua Valley, Rogue Valley, and Klamath—opposing the Jordan Cove Energy Project (JCEP). During the year, those LLs submitted four joint substantive, technical comments to the Oregon Department of State Lands on JCEP's Removal-Fill permit application, to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, to the US Army Corps of Engineers on the Section 404 Clean Water Act permit application, and to the State Department of Land Conservation and Development on the Coastal Zone Management Act consistency certification application. In May, the Department of Environmental Quality denied JCEP's Section 401 Water Quality Act application, although without prejudice (meaning the applicant can reapply). The FERC postponed their October release of the Final Environmental Impact Statement to November 15. Their decision on the project is expected in February 2020. Many of the state permit decisions are now expected in January of 2020. (See also [Water](#) section—where LLs opposed new proposed federal rules around Section 401 permitting.)

LWVUS jointly with LWVOR submitted another *amicus* brief to the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in the case of *Juliana v. U.S.* The brief argues in favor of the young plaintiffs who assert that it is the job of the federal government to protect them from the damaging effects of climate change. The brief also argues that it is the job of the courts to address claims that are asserted by the politically powerless and the courts should act to fulfill that vital function by allowing the merits of this case to proceed to the trial process.

This lawsuit would require the government to follow current science to implement a Climate Recovery Plan to ensure returning the planet to 350 PPM Co2 by 2100.

The **Dept. of Land Conservation and Development** received federal monies to update the 2010 Climate Change Adaptation Framework. (See also [Land Use](#)). The Framework includes input from over 23 state agencies who have been creating or updating **Climate Adaptation Plans**.: These plans are to include mitigation, sequestration and adaptation objectives. The new "risks" added from previous versions include Air Quality & Water Quality and recommendations include: Establish a leadership and governance structure with every agency providing at least one Climate Change budget item for 2021 and beyond. (See also [Land Use](#)).

LWVOR adopted the first state League Climate Emergency declaration during its May 2019 Convention. (See above) This resolution encourages local Leagues to consider advocating their local governments to declare actionable (binding) Climate Emergency declarations. These decisions have the goal of advocating for government (local and state) policies to stabilize the climate by returning atmospheric CO2 levels to below 350 ppm by 2100. Late in 2018, the [UN IPCC 1.5C recommendation](#) reflected reducing global net human-caused greenhouse gas emissions by 45% from 2010 levels by 2030, and net-zero by 2050

LWVOR and many local Leagues participated in the **Global Climate Strike** (Sept 20-27) week events and marches.

In Oct. the *Oregonians for Clean Air Campaign* (a similar coalition as Renew Oregon) submitted three initiative petitions (potential ballot measures) for voters to consider in the November 2020 election should a version of **HB 2020 (2019)** meeting the groups' principles not pass in the 2020 session.

LWVOR Action committee members represented the League at: the Oregon Leadership (Business) Summit, NW Energy Coalition Conference, Oregon's First Infrastructure Summit, Citizens Utility Board Conference and Oregon Coastal Caucus Economic Summit.

2020

SB 1530 would have created a cap and invest greenhouse gas program in Oregon. The League [supported](#) the bill with the -2 and -27 amendments. The bill passed the policy committee and Ways and Means, but a walkout occurred that did not allow the bill to go to the chambers for a vote and it died at the end of session.

2021

SB 392 was a bill to study fugitive methane emissions from natural gas. The League provided [testimony](#) in support. The bill passed the committee but died in Ways and Means.

HB 2479 addressed concerns around black carbon. The League provided [testimony](#) in support. The bill passed the committee but died in Ways and Means.

HB 3278 establishes a study of the production of seaweed for cattle to reduce methane emissions. The League provided [testimony](#) in support. The bill passed committee but died in Ways and Means.

2022

View [League testimony](#) related to [HB 4077](#), Environmental Justice (EJ) Investment. The League was part of a very large coalition and joined this [sign-on letter](#). The bill is initially funded at \$0.8M and will establish and expand a permanent state Environmental Justice Council and develops an environmental justice mapping tool to help state agencies develop policies and programs that alleviate burdens and yield environmental benefits for vulnerable and highly impacted communities. [The bill was a historic bipartisan effort, major celebrated win for Oregon](#). Oregon is one of two states in the nation with this kind of environmental justice legislation.

Climate emergency priority bills that died in committee include [SB 1534](#) Oregon Global Warming Commission's Natural & Working Lands - Carbon Sequestration. The League provided [testimony](#). Expect this bill to be reintroduced next session.

Outside the legislative session the League continues to track and respond to agency updates including from DEQ Director Richard Whitman [Report](#) (4/5/22). Also read Governor Brown's administration [Climate Policy](#) reporting.

The League continues to be very concerned; the [Office of Oregon Economic Analysis](#) continues to ignore Climate Change Financial risk disclosure in their very comprehensive public quarterly reporting. [The SEC is about to roll out a new policy](#) and Oregon and all other states will be required to address this issue starting in January. Any entity selling securities stocks or bonds will be required to conform. Related, the state of New York Treasury Department including their public employee pension fund has already started divesting from fossil fuel investments.

Another concern is related to access and transparency around Governor Brown's Executive Order 20-04 [Carbon Policy reporting](#). The web page, which originally listed all 16 agency and oversight commissions named in the executive orders with links to their EO reports, is no longer available to the public.

All the Clean Energy bills followed by the League were passed by the legislature and signed by the Governor.

[HB 4058](#) and [SB 1536](#) respectively, were merged into SB 1536, providing cooling for renters and vulnerable homeowners either with temporary air conditioners or installed heat pumps. League testimony for [HB 4058](#) and [SB 1536](#) had been provided while the bills were separate. The combined bill provides \$34 million to protect Oregonians during extreme temperature emergencies: \$25 million for heat pump installation and associated home upgrades, \$5 million for air conditioner distribution, and \$4 million to operate community cooling and warming centers.

[SB 1519 A](#), Property Tax Exemption for Community Solar Projects was supported by League [Testimony](#) agreeing that the proportion of a community solar project owned by residential customers or leased by residential subscribers should receive a property tax exemption just as certain alternative energy systems already receive one. The revenue impact statement projects a loss of \$3.5 million to local government and schools through the 2025-27 biennium.

[HB 4059](#), which contains fixes for the large-project labor standards in [HB 2021](#) (2021) was amended to remove the requirement for apprenticeship programs on renewable energy generation, sequestration or storage facility projects other than community solar between 2 and 10 megawatts capacity. League [testimony](#) had supported the lower value on all projects.

[SB 1567](#) requires an owner or operator of a large bulk oils or liquid fuels terminal in Columbia, Multnomah, or Lane County to conduct a comprehensive seismic vulnerability assessment and provide a mitigation plan. In addition, the Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE) is required to develop an energy security plan evaluating the ability to recover from physical threats including a magnitude 9.0 Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake or cybersecurity threats. The League provided [testimony](#). A Ways and Means amendment provided \$712,318 for the 2021-23 biennium. The fiscal impact statement estimated costs of \$4.2 million for the 2023-25 biennium: \$1.6 million general fund, \$1 million federal funds, \$1.7 million from fees submitted by terminal owners/operators.

The League submitted [testimony](#) In support of [SB 1518](#) to adopt a construction Reach Code to reduce building emissions by at least 10% below the base code. The bill was amended to establish a Task Force on Resilient Efficient Buildings to identify and evaluate policies related to building codes and building decarbonization for new and existing buildings that would enable this state to meet greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals while maximizing additional benefits, such as increasing energy efficiency, improving resilience against climate change, improving public health and air quality, reducing the percentage of household income that goes toward energy costs and mitigating the displacement and other impacts that result from wildfires, heat waves and other climate change events. The amount of \$279,359 was appropriated to support the Task Force. This may actually lead to more efficiency in buildings than provided by the Reach Code.

[HB 4139](#) requires ODOT to establish a pilot program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by means of replacing or substituting certain materials used in constructing or maintaining the state transportation system The [League](#) joined environmental, materials manufacturing, and contractor associations to testify in favor of the bill. The bill also establishes the Medium and Heavy-Duty Electrification Charging Fund for a grant program to support medium and heavy-duty zero emission vehicle charging and fueling infrastructure projects. An amount of \$15 million was appropriated by Section 397 of [HB 5202](#) (the omnibus budget bill) to Department of Environmental Quality for the Medium and Heavy-Duty Electrification Charging Fund.

Climate Protection Program

Oregon’s natural gas utilities, Northwest Natural Gas, Avista, and Cascade Natural Gas, and separately several business associations including Oregon Farm Bureau, Oregon Business & Industry Association, Oregon Manufacturers and Commerce, and Alliance of Western Energy Consumers filed [lawsuits](#) March 18 against the Environmental Quality Commission of the Department of Environmental Quality challenging Oregon’s first greenhouse gas regulatory program, known as the Climate Protection Program (CPP). The petitions do not explain what allegedly is illegal about the CPP rules but cite a statute that allows a court to invalidate agency rulemaking if it is unconstitutional, exceeds the agency’s authority, or was adopted in a procedurally deficient way. Oregon Public Broadcasting (OPB) published an [article](#) about the suit.

As described in the 2021 section, League members were involved in the year and a half development of the program initially designated as “Cap and Reduce” under Executive Order 20-04, which survived several court challenges. The Executive Order specified that agencies should reduce greenhouse gas emissions while staying compatible with existing legislation. During the development process, the Department of Environmental Quality made significant efforts to stay within their legislative boundaries despite public pressure. Fortunately, the passage of HB 2021 (2021), 100% Clean Energy, solved one of the key issues: excluding natural-gas power plants from the Program.

Jordan Cove Energy Project: The League continued to provide support to the four local Leagues (LLs)—Coos Bay, Umpqua Valley, Rogue Valley, and Klamath—opposing the Jordan Cove Energy Project (JCEP). During the year, those LLs submitted jointly five substantive, technical comments to state and federal entities during comment periods for permits needed by the proponent for project construction.

LWVUS jointly with LWVOR submitted another amicus brief to the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in the case of *Juliana v. U.S.* The brief argues in favor of the young plaintiffs who assert that it is the job of the federal government to protect them from the damaging effects of climate change. The brief also argues that it is the job of the courts to address claims that are asserted by the politically powerless and the courts should act to fulfill that vital function by allowing the merits of this case to proceed to the trial process. This lawsuit would require the government to follow current science to implement a Climate Recovery Plan to ensure returning the planet to 350 PPM Co2 by 2100.

Oregon OSHA adopted permanent rules to protect workers from excessive heat and wildfire smoke in May 2022. The heat illness prevention rules became effective on June 15, 2022, and the wildfire smoke protection rules on July 1, 2022. These regulations require employers to provide access to shade and drinking water, implement rest break schedules, and offer training to mitigate heat-related illnesses. For wildfire smoke, employers must assess air quality, provide respirators, and implement exposure controls when the Air Quality Index (AQI) reaches certain levels. LWVOR supported these proposed changes in a [June 2021 sign on letter](#).

2023

The League continues to be a member of the NW Energy Coalition.

The League of Women Voters [urged Congress to support](#) S. Con. Res. 13/H. Con. Res. 56, which recognized the disproportionate impact of the human-caused climate crisis on children and called for a national, science-based, and just climate recovery plan. This resolution aimed to protect children's health, rights, and future by addressing the urgent need to reduce global atmospheric carbon dioxide to below 350 parts per million by 2100.

# DOGAMI

## Position History and Implementation – DOGAMI

2020

The Dept. of Geology and Mineral Industries (DOGAMI) was only given a one-year budget in 2019. The League believes the science work of DOGAMI is critical for Oregon and we encouraged the DOGAMI Board to request General Funds in 2020. We supported a proposed fee increase but opposed the -4 amendment that would have changed public policy on certain permits. The League is also following the Calico gold mine project outside of Vale, in part to review the success (or not) of a new consolidated permitting process among state agencies. At the June 5<sup>th</sup> Emergency Board meeting DOGAMI Geological Survey and Services Division was funded for the second year of the biennium.

2025 (rev. Sept. 2025, Peggy Lynch)

The League continues to follow this important agency and engages with the agency in support of the Geological Survey & Services (GS&S) program because that division addresses public safety, including providing data on tsunami lines and landslide areas. And now is helping with groundwater data. The Mineral Land Regulation and Reclamation (MLRR) program should continue to be fee-funded and assure that the permits processed support our laws and that mines are regularly inspected.

LWVOR [supported SB 836](#), a bill that significantly increases permit fees for mining related activities. The League engaged in conversations around the fee bill to assure that the agency can have enough staff to support permittees, the general public, the environment and the agency. The current target for mine inspections has been 20% of mines. The agency has consistently NOT met even this small target.

The League followed the conversation and eventual action around funding DOGAMI (thru \$10 million of Common School Fund (CSF) monies) to create a pilot project for geologic carbon sequestration on CFS lands in northeastern Oregon.

## Offshore and Coastal Management

Adopted May 1990, 2013

**The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes responsible and responsive government management of the public's coastal and nearshore natural resources shall be based upon:**

1. **A complete environmental assessment, cumulative impact analysis, and baseline data specific to Oregon.**
2. **Recognition of coastal states and local government's rights, jurisdictions, and responsibilities to preserve and protect marine and coastal environment and economy.**

**Federal government's offshore activities must be consistent with Oregon's approved Coastal Zone Management Plan.**

**The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports uniformity of regulations governing the coastal management zone, with opportunity for public input. Jurisdictions should have the ability to enhance regulations to better address local conditions. The League supports the development and maintenance of local comprehensive plans and development codes. Funding should be adequate for effective management and enforcement and should come from a variety of sources.**

**The League opposes any revision, interpretation, or application of Oregon's established marine policy that would diminish Land Conservation and Development Commission Goal 19's strong environmental and natural resources conservation policy giving clear priority to long-term renewable resource uses.**

**The League of Women Voters of Oregon opposes oil and gas exploration and development within the state's territorial sea, and requests the state to oppose any**

**federal lease sales within the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone off the Oregon coast. The ecological integrity, renewable natural resources, and beneficial uses of Oregon's ocean water must be protected.**

**The League of Women Voters of Oregon opposes exploration and development of marine minerals within the state's territorial sea. The League supports academic research that would not adversely affect the ecological integrity, renewable natural resources, and beneficial uses of the state's territorial sea.**

**The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports a state policy that calls on the federal government to ban the exploration and development of marine minerals with the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone off the Oregon coast. Should a ban not be effected, the following must be required:**

- 1. An unbiased, credible scientific E.I.S. should be completed prior to any offshore mineral exploration or recovery operation.**
- 2. Offshore mineral activities should be evaluated for degradation of the marine environment, risk to ocean fisheries, and coastal erosion problems.**
- 3. A complete socioeconomic impact statement of offshore developments effect on the states and coastal economy should be made.**

**The League of Women Voters of Oregon affirms the public's right to be completely informed, actively involved and assured the opportunity to participate in decisions about offshore exploration and development, as well as onshore facilities that support offshore development.**

**The League of Women Voters of Oregon endorses adequate industry-financed oil spill contingency funds, compensation funds, and company bonding for marine mineral mining activities to cover claims for damage caused by their operations, onshore support facilities, and transporting vessels. Governments and other claimants should be reimbursed for, but not limited to, the following:**

- 1. Oil spill clean-up costs.**
- 2. Loss of natural resources or loss of use of natural resources.**
- 3. Impairment of earning capacity.**
- 4. Damage to real or personal property and personal injury.**

**The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports a policy which allows the state to terminate or modify a lease for environmental endangerment or for public safety within the state's territorial sea.**

**The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports the creation and operation of marine reserves and protected areas on the Oregon Coast. Siting and management of reserves should reflect a variety of factors, including habitat, species diversity, fisheries and tourism, with sound science being the most critical. The reserves should have identified goals, and continuous funding should come from multiple sources.**

**The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports active research into ocean energy technologies. Research should incorporate evaluation of impacts on marine habitats and the coastal economy.**

**Funding should be from multiple sources. Commercial deployment should be allowed only after adequate scientific research is completed and regulations have been adopted. Monitoring should be ongoing with necessary actions and modifications taken to protect the marine environment. Commercial operations should agree to bear the cost of remediating and restoring any environmental damage.**

**The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports actions to restore and preserve estuaries to assure they function effectively in the long term. Measures could include additional reserves, streamside protection, planting, removal of invasive species, scientific research, restoration, and response to climate change. Funding should be from multiple sources. Estuary restoration should encourage education and volunteer involvement.**

**The League recognizes that dredging may be necessary to keep deep-water channels open for maritime commerce. Prior to activity, environmental assessments must be completed to ensure protection of habitat. Design and execution should minimize damage to natural habitats.**

**Recognizing that mining affects water quantity, quality, and habitat, mining practices should be strictly regulated to minimize damage and require restoration. In some instances, where preserving water quality and habitat is vital, mining should be banned.**

## **Position History and Implementation - Offshore and Coastal Management**

1989

Emerging scientific information that stressed the increasing importance of a productive, unpolluted ocean, shoreline and wetlands to the environment and economy of the nation and the world, prompted the appointment of the Coastal Issues Chair in August 1988. The 1989 state League Convention adopted a one-year Coastal Issues Study. Previously the League had successfully used Oregon land use laws to testify against deep-sea mining in the Gorda Ridge off the southern Oregon coast. We objected to the inadequate environmental impact studies. Now the Department of the interior (DOI) under the Outer Continental Shelf Land Act (OCSLA) has mandated offshore oil, gas and mineral development along the entire Oregon and Washington coastline.

The lease sale #132 is scheduled for April 1992. Using the LWVUS positions, the Oregon League supported Governor Goldschmidt's and U.S. Congressional delegation's request for an indefinite postponement of the Oregon and Washington offshore lease sale. Letters were sent to President Bush Senior and Secretary of the Interior Lujan stressing DOI's analysis that the Oregon/Washington lease sale was the most productive renewable natural resource area in the Continental United States as well as the most environmentally sensitive. Written statements were given to the Oregon Ocean Resources Management Task Force formed to advise the governor and the Oregon legislators. The League testified on **SB 1038**, which increases the required liability coverage for oil transporting vessels in Oregon's territorial seas and **SB 1039** establishing Oregon's oil spill response plan. Both bills passed. We submitted written testimony on **SB 1152** establishing Oregon's offshore development policy. The League again expressed the need for completion of all environmental studies prior to exploration and development.

1990

The League study confirmed the unique value and productivity of the natural resources of the Oregon/Washington lease sale area that juxtaposed its extreme environmental sensitivity. Research scientists on the exploration ship Aloha said they were amazed by the tremendous biological variety, diversity, complexity and environmental sensitivity of the studied areas.

Our study found serious inadequacies in the proposed lease sale E.I.S. This was authenticated by the conclusion of the simultaneous Presidential Scientific and Technical Task Force's evaluation of the adequacy of the E.I.S.'s for the Outer Continental Shelf leases. The Presidential Task Force stated additional studies are needed prior to lease sale decisions to prevent unacceptable consequences in environmentally sensitive areas. President Bush Senior banned new oil leasing off Oregon, Washington and several other coastal states until after the year 2000.

The League testified before the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs on May 12 concerning the Federal Outer Continental Shelf off and gas-leasing program in the Pacific Northwest region. On May 29, testimony was presented on the Oregon Ocean Resources Management Plan before the Oregon Ocean Resources Management Task Force. On July 17, 1990, testimony was given before the Oregon Placer Minerals Technical Task Force on the September oceanographic cruise to take vibracore samples of the marine minerals offshore Gold Beach and Cape Blanco.

Testimony on the draft Oregon Ocean Resources Management Plan was made before the LCDC Commission on September 20.

On November 8, testimony was presented in response to the staff report and findings in support of the present Draft Oregon Ocean Resources Management Plan.

In response to the Department of the Interior's proposal to open up thousands of miles of coastal areas to new oil leases, the Oregon League sent out an informational letter to all coastal state Leagues on how to position their state and their citizens to mount an effective legal challenge to a proposed offshore oil and gas lease by DOI.

1991: The League wrote a strongly worded critique and stated its active opposition to any proposed future exploration and development offshore Oregon as comments on DOI's Draft Proposal for the Outer Continental Shelf Natural Gas and Oil Resources Management: Comprehensive Program 1991-97.

The League opposed any "preferred alternative" option that would allow oil and gas exploration and development in any proposed Federal Marine Sanctuary off Oregon and Washington. This was an attempt to circumvent Congress' intent in establishing the Marine Sanctuary Act.

During "Day at the Legislature" our local Leagues successfully lobbied the 66th Oregon Legislative Assembly in support of coastal issues. The League testified before a very supportive Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee that recommended the League's participation in writing the final coastal issues legislation.

On June 13, Governor Barbara Roberts signed into law SB 499, the bill banning marine mineral exploration and development in the Oregon territorial sea. Governor Roberts presented League President Kappy Eaton with a parchment copy of the bill and the signature pen in recognition of the League's efforts on behalf of their important socioeconomic and environmental legislation. **SB 162**, the Oregon Ocean Management Plan and the Ocean Policy Advisory Council passed. It includes League suggestions that improved coastal representation on the Ocean Policy Advisory Council, that stated Oregon's policy gives priority and protection to the long-term values and benefits of renewable natural resources, and that reaffirmed the authority of acknowledged comprehensive plans of adjacent coastal counties and cities.

**SB 242**, the Oil Spill Prevention and Cleanup Bill amendments, corrected League concerns about liability problems for the Department of Environmental Quality. The League's other concerns about the environmental sensitivity of the Oregon ocean and the inadequacy of the scientific and technical capabilities of oil spill cleanups were addressed in the legislative findings.

1993

The Clinton/Gore administration is opposed to expanding offshore oil and gas exploration and development into "frontier" areas like Oregon. President Clinton granted Oregon a deferral of offshore oil and gas exploration and development until the year 2000. He also admitted there was inadequate scientific data to do the accurate risk analysis required under the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act. This statement puts Oregon in an ideal legal position to oppose all future offshore oil and gas activities.

The federal government lacks the millions of dollars needed to do the extensive scientific environmental studies. The high cost to undertake the studies in relationship to Oregon's limited estimated oil and gas reserves does not make economic sense. Oregon has only a temporary ban on offshore oil and gas exploration and development in the territorial sea until 1996. The Oregon Ocean Policy Advisory Council will make its final recommendations for the Oregon Ocean Resources Management Plan to the Oregon Legislature in 1995, calling for a permanent ban and that needed legislation be passed.

1995

The new U.S. Congress attempted to remove President Clinton's deferral from offshore oil and gas leasing until the year 2000 for "frontier" areas like Oregon and Washington but met strong opposition from most Oregon and Washington Congress members, so the congressional attack switched to oil drilling in the much more lucrative Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The refuge receives no protection from Alaska's governor or Congress members. Minerals Management Service (MMS) asked for comments on the Offshore Oil and Gas Leasing Program for the years 1997-2002.

Although MMS received more than 2,300 comments, LWVOR was the only organization from Oregon or Washington to submit comments and to oppose the inclusion of Oregon and Washington in the program. Our opposition was based upon the inability to meet the legal requirements of the Outer Continental Shelf Land Act for accurate risk assessment and impact analysis because of insufficient, unbiased, scientific information. LWVOR also said additional research was needed on salmon and steelhead which are close to becoming endangered species. LWVOR also pointed out no studies exist as to whether oil platforms and pipelines could withstand a major subduction earthquake. Oregon and Washington were not included in the program.

MMS's Offshore Technology Assessment and Research (TAR) Branch listed as a critical safety concern the ability of platforms to withstand earthquakes. Only the LWVOR comments raised this question.

Oregon and Washington stand on firm legal grounds for further deferrals but MMS must continue to receive strong opposition from Oregon government and Oregonians. The comments of 12 oil and gas industries contained a request to return deferred areas to the lease option.

LWVOR will critique the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the 1997 to 2002 oil and gas leasing program. It should be released in December 1995.

1997

Oregon and Washington have been excluded from offshore oil and gas leasing programs until 2002. In 1999 the oil industry will be nominating Oregon for inclusion in the 2002 to 2007 leasing programs. Oregon must insist that the EIS prove that offshore oilrigs can withstand a major subduction earthquake and that exploration will not affect the endangered status of salmon. The League must ensure that Oregon's new U.S. Congressional delegates are well informed about offshore development. The 1997 Oregon Legislature let die in committee, without even a public hearing, two bills that would have been very beneficial to the management of the Oregon coast.

**HB 2141** would have given Oregon Parks and Recreation Department the authority to enforce permit requirements, obtain injunctions for noncompliance and issue civil penalties; and the vested responsibility for protecting Oregon's ocean beaches from inappropriate structures and modifications. These sea walls, revetments, and shore alterations can adversely affect adjacent property, impinge public beach access, accelerate erosion, degrade the scenic beauty of Oregon's beaches, and endanger human life.

**SB 153** would have required local governments to permanently maintain their public ocean beach access and granted tax exemptions to individuals or organizations that dedicated their property for access. The boom of gated communities, condominiums and private homes has greatly reduced public access while tourism is expanding.

LWVOR should monitor real estate developments and the cultivation of shellfish on state waters and lands for any infringement of the Beach Bill. LWVOR should support Governor Kitzhaber's Oregon Coastal Salmon Restoration Plan to avoid Federal endangered status.

1999

**SB 1060** was passed and signed by the governor granting exemption from taxation for easements for public beach access.

2001

Lifting the moratorium on oil and gas leasing off Oregon's coast (as well as California's, Washington's and Alaska's coasts) was threatened early in 2001. This fall, the existing moratorium was extended for 5 years for Oregon and Washington. LWV closely monitored this situation both in Washington D.C. and at the state level.

2002

During the interim, Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) requested the Department of Land Conservation to change Statewide Land Use Planning Goal 18: Beaches and Dunes. ODOT wanted to be able to riprap for highway construction and repair without meeting the existing permitting requirements. LWVOR testified in opposition before the Land Conservation and Development Commission.

2003

The same concept, with LWVOR still opposed, surfaced in **HB 3228** and failed. LWVOR unsuccessfully opposed **HB 3534** which radically changed Oregon's ocean policy, eliminating requirements for coordination with other coastal states, converting agency members of the Oregon Policy Advisory Board (OPAC) to non-voting members, giving coastal majority membership on OPAC, and requiring Senate confirmation for non-elected appointees.

2005

A bill that the League supported, allowing expansion of the South Slough National Estuarine Reserve, failed.

2007

A bill that extends the moratorium on oil, gas and sulfur exploration, development or production in Oregon's territorial sea passed the Legislature. However, the Governor may lift the moratorium in the event of an oil embargo affecting the U.S.

The Legislature also began to address the issue of shipping of aquatic invasive species by creating a Task Force. **SB 643** also revised the definition of "cargo vessel" to make non-operating vessels, such as ships to be wrecked, subject to all of the protective state laws governing "cargo vessels".

2009

As the League prepares to review and update its Coastal positions with the 2010-11 study, the Legislature **HB 3013** passed implementing the Ocean Policy Advisory Committee's recommendations concerning six near ocean sites with the establishment of a pilot marine reserve at Otter Rock and a pilot marine reserve and a marine protected area at Redfish Rocks.

It also approved further evaluation of potential marine reserves at Cape Falcon, Cascade Head, and Cape Perpetua and development of a marine reserve proposal at Cape Arago Seven Devils. To fund this program, \$2.8 million from the New Carissa insurance settlement was allocated in various agency budgets. These monies were also authorized to do nearshore sea mapping, much needed for tsunami planning and wave energy projects as well as marine reserves.

The Land Conservation and Development Commission is continuing to work on updating the Territorial Sea Plan, governing actions within Oregon's territorial sea.

2010

A new 10-year ban on allowing oil and gas leases within our Territorial Sea was passed. The League provided testimony during the interim and again during public hearings in support of **HB 3613**. Members monitored work on marine reserves and the adoption of amendments to the Territorial Sea Plan.

2011

Although **HB 2009** did not pass (and the League had concerns regarding the bill reducing broad citizen involvement and amendments that were considered putting the Legislature in charge of any work plan), the Governor has directed agencies to move forward with the Ocean Policy Advisory Council recommendations to establish new reserves. Limited monies were allocated to continue work on the current reserves and begin work on these new ones.

2012

**SB 1510**, creating a system of marine reserves for Oregon, passed. The League was silent on this bill awaiting completion of our Coastal Study.

2013

Ongoing monies were budgeted to continue work on the designated marine reserves and marine protected areas.

See the [Water](#) section on **HB 3172** related to septic systems. The Environmental Protection Agency has told the state to address failing systems in the Coastal Zone. The League supported **SB 737** (passed) that established an Oregon Ocean Science Trust to find monies to help with marine science needs of the state.

2014

The League provided testimony to the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission in support of General Funds for their Nearshore and Estuarine Management.

2015

The League supported **HB 3474** to allow for a Trust Lands Transfer of the Elliott State Forest. It did not pass, but the League continues to work with others to seek answers to keep the Forest in public hands. We provided testimony before the State Land Board on this issue and continue to work with partners. The State Land Board adopted a “Protocol” that would allow for the sale, but includes “public benefit” requirements for any offer. (See also [Forests](#))

2017

The League testified with others in support of keeping the Elliott State Forest in public hands. After an initial decision by the State Land Board to begin sale to a private timber company, the Board reversed its decision in May and cancelled that sale.

The League was instrumental in providing public testimony and encouraging public advocacy, including writing newspaper opinion pieces and press releases. We were also involved in legislative support of the provision in **SB 5505** for \$100 million bonding to begin buying the conservation values of the Forest and **HB 5006** for monies to begin working on a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) to assure endangered spotted owls, murrelets and salmon continue to be protected while allowing for some harvesting of second growth timber to provide jobs and keep the forest healthy. We are now involved in assuring a public process during that HCP work.

The League supported **SB 847**, a bill that creates a process whereby Common School Trust lands could be transferred out of the Common School Fund while keeping the lands in public ownership. It passed.

2018

The League provided testimony in opposition to the current federal administration’s proposal to open up oil drilling off the Oregon coast. We expect to support a bill in 2019 to again set a moratorium on oil drilling in Oregon’s territorial waters off the Oregon coast.

The State Court of Appeals held the Part Five amendments to the Territorial Sea Plan were invalid on procedural grounds. The League encouraged the Land Conservation and Development Commission to take action to address the procedures and again adopt the Plan as previously proposed. (See also [Land Use](#).)

2019

The League supported **SB 256** to limit offshore drilling which passed overwhelmingly and **SB 753**, which also passed, to allow the Oregon Ocean Science Trust to raise outside monies to fund their work. We supported **SB 260** to fund studies on ocean acidification, but that bill died in Ways and Means. **SB 961**, a bill that would require changes to Goal 18 related to riprap, was opposed by the League and did not pass. A Work Group is considering possible amendments to Goal 18 related to who should be allowed to install riprap and what protections should exist to other properties.

The League provided testimony to the State Land Board and the legislature on the South Slough National Estuarine Research Center which continues under the Dept. of State Lands and funding was provided for improvements supported by the League.

The Rocky Habitat Working Group continues to work on site specific designation language and process criteria. This year the Territorial Sea Plan Part Five was adopted, as well as Part Three. The League was involved in these efforts.

We follow the work of the Ocean Policy Advisory Council. The Oregon Legislative Coastal Caucus (CC) held their 8th Annual Coastal Caucus Economic Summit this August 21-22 where they provided panels on “Infrastructure Investments: A Collaborative Approach”. League members attended to learn more about coastal issues. League members have attended the Oregon Ocean Trust and State Land Board meetings.

2020

SB 1554 requested monies to the Oregon Ocean Science Trust and the Dept. of Fish and Wildlife for ocean science research. The League **supported** and the bill passed committee but did not get referred to Ways and Means and died.

League members followed work on the Rocky Habitat Management Strategy and an update to the Territorial Sea Plan.

**2021** *(revised 2021, Peggy Lynch)*

The League followed **HB 2603**, a bill that addresses issues around undersea cable installations. We supported **SB 126**, a bill that statutorily increases the boundary of the South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve. We also advocated for continuation of the State Land Board as the overseer of the Reserve and they will receive an annual report on the Reserve in the future.

The League supported **HB 3114**, a bill that will provide \$4 million to the Oregon Ocean Science Trust (OOST) to address ocean acidification. We are following the on-going work on the Rocky

Habitat Management Strategy as related to updating the Territorial Sea Plan and a consideration of changes to Goal 18.

Our Climate Team supported **HB 3375** to consider floating offshore ocean wind energy projects.

A League member has been appointed to the Ocean Policy Advisory Council.

HB 3375 supports planning for floating offshore wind projects off the Oregon Coast by 2030. The League provided [testimony](#) in support. The bill passed.

2022

A League member was appointed to the Oregon Ocean Science Trust by the State Land Board. Monies from the 2021 session are being awarded. Additional money was in the 2022 budget bill.

Oregon is investigating offshore ocean wind and both climate and coastal members are following this work. **SB 1534**, the natural and working lands and waters bill did not pass but the link to estuaries protections was a part of that bill which the League engaged.

## 2023 (revised Oct. 2023, Peggy Lynch)

The League actively opposed the original [HB 3382](#), a bill that would have provided certain Oregon Ports with an exception from our land use planning system to allow dredging and other activities around these Ports without the current public process and federal consistency requirements. . LWV Coos and LWVOR testimonies: [March 14](#), [second](#), [third](#). [Coalition testimony](#). [LWVOR testimony](#). On May 14, LWVOR issued an [Action Alert](#) to oppose the bill. The bill was finally amended as [HB 3382 B](#) that reduced the bill to only the Port of Coos Bay and created a new exception to potentially allow deeper and wider dredging of the Port's channel while keeping the public process for Goal exceptions and placed other sideboards on the potential dredging. LWV Coos Bay continues to be engaged in updating the Coos Bay Estuary Management Plan.

The League provided [testimony](#) in support of [HB 2903](#), a bill to require Fish and Wildlife and State Lands to provide communications staff to help to continue to implement and support Oregon's marine reserves and new management areas. The bill did not pass nor were the staffing positions requested funded.

The League continues to follow state and federal discussions on the potential for off- shore wind projects off the Oregon coast.

## 2024 (revised June 2024, Peggy Lynch)

The League signed on to a letter of support for [HB 4132](#), funding for marine reserves. The bill adds staffing for support, research and communication around Oregon's 10 reserves . The bill passed and was signed by the Governor.

The League provided comments on [HB 4080-1](#) in support of staffing at DLCD to provide a robust public engagement process as the federal government considers potential leases off shore for wind energy projects. The bill passed and was signed by the Governor. Soon after, the federal government announced that they will begin a process of auctioning leases off the coasts of Brookings and Coos Bay. Our local Leagues continue to follow this effort as there are concerns around the effect of these projects on our coastal economies and environment

## 2025 (Rev. Sept. 2025 Peggy Lynch)

The League joined others in [support](#) of [HB 3580](#) , a bill related to protection of eelgrass resources in state waters. We also joined them in support of [HB 3587](#), a bill that would have directed the Department of Land Conservation and Development to take certain actions related to rocky habitat management . We also provided testimony to LCDC in support of keeping a position with the agency addressing rocky habitat, an element of the Territorial Sea Plan, which the League has supported in the past. Neither these two bills not the budget ask succeeded this session.

The LWV Coos League continues to follow the proposed container ship proposal for the Port of Coos Bay and has done extensive research on the project. The legislature has continued for provide funding, of concern to the Coos League.

# Energy Conservation

Adopted May 1973; Educational Update 2003\*

- A.** The members of the League of Women Voters of Oregon support state policies which promote long range planning for conservation and wise development of energy sources. League supports:
1. A governmental agency to evaluate power needs estimates and plan source development. This agency should include representatives of:
    - a. utility companies,
    - b. the general public, and
    - c. all levels of government.
  10. Governmental programs to provide public education and information to encourage information participation in all power decisions, both for production and conservation.
- CC.** The League believes that in any decision to build a power plant:
1. The most important consideration is environmental quality;
  2. Of lesser importance, but to be taken into account are:
    - a. size of electric bills and prices of goods,
    - b. industrial development,
    - c. cultural standards.
- DD.** The League supports the following conservation measures:
1. Rate structures encouraging the wise use of energy. To this end League favors:
    - a. a low base rate for essential use, above this,
    - b. higher rates to discourage waste.
  11. Government funding of research and development efforts to discover new technologies:
    - a. to provide efficient methods for energy production and use with minimal environmental damage,
    - b. emphasis should be given to renewable resources.
  12. Governmental programs to provide public education and information.
  13. Building codes which will specify standards of design and insulation that minimize waste of energy used for heating, cooling, and lighting.
- EE.** The League believes that state or region should be allowed higher standards for nuclear plants than those set by the federal government.

\*Updated for background information only – no position change.

## Position Implementation - Energy Conservation

1973

League successfully aided the redrafting and support of legislation directing that energy studies be made and an advisory committee is established to develop an energy policy for use during the 1975 legislative session.

1975

League worked for several bills which promoted solar energy, most of which failed. One successful bill exempts the cost of a solar heating system from real property taxation for a period of time. The League supported Governor Straub's bill to create a Department of Energy and the Energy Facility Siting Council (which replaced the Nuclear and Thermal Energy Council). This bill passed, and consolidated the state's authority for dealing with energy problems. Other successful bills that League followed concerned geothermal exploration and the creation of a seven-member Energy Conservation Board to suggest energy conserving changes in building codes.

1977

The 60 or so energy bills in the Legislature fell into three categories: conservation, regulation of energy facilities, and research and development. The League actively supported a bill which increased fees for energy facility site certificate applicants and legislation providing an adequate budget for the Department of Energy. A bill was opposed which would have made the Public Utility Commissioners elected officials and provided for a three-member Commission. The League also opposed bills virtually eliminating public participation in decisions by the Energy Facility Siting Council and giving facility-siting responsibilities to the Legislature. All of these bills failed.

1978

Beginning in the fall, the Northwest Regional Power Bill took top priority for action. Based on LWVOR and LWVUS positions, League held press conferences on the bill, wrote letters to members of Congress, testified at Congressional field hearings, lobbied the bill when in Washington, D.C., gave speeches to organizations and at energy conferences, debated provisions of the bill on television, held an educational forum, and developed coalition which lobbied for improvement of that bill. League developed Position History and Implementation on the legislation which was widely circulated throughout the Northwest. A close working relationship was developed with other state Leagues in the Pacific Northwest and with the LWVUS.

LWVUS took a keen interest because the bill establishes a precedent for the rest of the nation as a mechanism for financing electrical energy development. The League opposed the guaranteed purchase provision, but worked to improve the sections dealing with conservation incentives and public input, restricting the broad authority of the Bonneville Power Administrator, independent forecasting, and the coordination of the multiple uses of the Columbia River, including the protection of in-stream flows and fish runs.

1979

The LWVOR and Lincoln County League supported, unsuccessfully, legislation to place the regulation of liquefied natural gas facilities under the jurisdiction of the Energy Facilities Citing Council. The League supported the creation of an elected three-member energy commission responsible for developing renewable energy resources and for selling that energy to the public utilities and co-ops for distribution. They would have used the state bonding authority that was authorized by the Legislature in 1973. The measure failed.

1981

The energy committee has focused on the implementation of the Pacific Northwest Power and Conservation Act. In this, LWVOR joined 30 public interest groups including the LWV of Idaho, LWV of Montana, and LWV of Washington, to form the Northwest Conservation Act Coalition. The League supported the Coalition's Model Plan provisions, and presented testimony on conservation and inverted rates before the Northwest Power Planning Council. Many of the coalition and public interest group suggestions were incorporated in the final plan adopted by the council.

League testimony also strongly supported the protection of fish migration. To monitor the Power and Fish Plan, League is represented at bimonthly meetings with the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) Administrator and staff. League supported successful legislation providing state tax credits for conservation and solar installations.

1983

The League was successful in supporting a bill authorizing a State Energy Plan. The Citizen's Utility Board, which we supported, did not pass. The Citizen's Utility Board is a voluntary organization to provide legal representation on behalf of consumers before regulatory agencies, primarily in Public Utility Commission (PUC) rate cases.

The League wrote to Senator Hatfield expressing concern regarding excessive appropriation of water in Oregon rivers and streams for use in hydro dams and impoundments. League stated in a letter to the BPA that BPA could prevent unneeded resource development by denying interstice access to all applicants whose resource plans do not conform to the Northwest Power Planning Council's plan.

1984

Our major efforts focused on conservation. League testified before the Oregon Department of Energy, stressing the importance of conservation in the two-year State Energy Plan, filed as an interested party in the PUC's hearings regarding the level of financial commitment to conservation required of the private utilities in a period of energy surplus, and monitored building code deliberations to insure they included conservation level increases in all new construction for electrically heated homes as mandated by the Northwest Power Planning Council. The Citizen's Utility Board was placed on the ballot in November 1984 by initiative petition and passed.

1985

Three measures the League supported eventually died: Model Conservation Standards, appliance efficiency standards and a rental weatherization measure. Energy tax credit for business and industry did pass.

1987

It was another mixed bag of bills that passed and failed. While the State Home Oil Weatherization (SHOW) low interest-rate loan program was extended, the appliance efficiency bill, which would require all new refrigerators and freezers to meet California's 1992 standards sailed through the Senate but died in the House. We opposed the "differential rates" bill as a disincentive to conservation but it passed.

The Least Cost Planning bill had its first hearing in Oregon, but did not make it through.

1988

Long-Range Planning. The League asked BPA to do long-range planning and give appropriate long-range value to conservation.

1989

Model Conservation Standards. Testified before Northwest Power Planning Council supporting efforts to get Model Conservation Standards in all northwest states. 1989 Oregon's Legislature did not act on MCS and efforts will be made to get improvements in building codes through rulemaking.

Asked Bonneville Power Administration (2/16/88) to maintain its position on long- term Intertie Access Policy, which provides that only resources that comply with Northwest Power Planning and Conservation Act specifications on environmental criteria have access. Gave testimony to Northwest Power Planning Council (6/23/88) supporting their Protected Areas Plan, which banned hydroelectric dams on specified northwest rivers.

1990-91

League members testified before Northwest Power Planning Council asking that Power Plan include predominant reliance on renewable resources and conservation with policies that limit reliance on nuclear fission. Gave testimony before the council objecting to closed working sessions. Supported the building codes adopted by the Oregon Structural Code Advisory Board, which approximate the Model Conservation Standards of the Power Planning Council.

1992

In 1992 we worked with NCAC to get a ruling from the Oregon Public Utility Commission requiring Portland General Electric and Pacific Power & Light to prepare decoupling plans. Decoupling is the instrument whereby a utility's profits are not based on the amount of sales but rather the number of customers. This encourages conservation measures. The League was represented on the Legislature's Electric Magnetic Fields Committee (1993). A decision was made to continue monitoring for legislation.

League worked hard to pass residential weatherization (1983, reauthorized 1989), Small Scale Energy Projects (1981), Energy Efficient State Buildings (1989), Least Cost Planning rules for utilities (1989), and Global Warming Strategy (1989). Through the Northwest Conservation Act Coalition, we have worked with other public interest groups to monitor Bonneville Power Administration and the Power Planning Council in administration of the Act (1980 to present).

1995

Two bills in which we took an active interest passed in changed form, which met our objections: The Oregon Department of Energy moved to the Department of Consumer Affairs as the Office of Energy, and a bill reorganizing the Energy Facility Siting Council was amended to reinstate the Need for Power Standards (1995).

Regionally there is much concern in 1995 about Bonneville Power Administration. Publicity about "competitiveness" indicates that these agencies are operated for the

benefit of its utility and direct service industry customers, and has made cuts in conservation (least-cost resource) and fish and wildlife mitigation.

League joined other public interest groups in signing a letter to the Northwest Congressional delegation (9/18/95) asking for a comprehensive review of Bonneville's role in the Northwest's energy future. Several utility CEO s also signed the letter.

1999

Though the League was not an active participant, probably the most progressive energy restructuring bill in the country, **SB 1149**, was overwhelmingly passed by both Houses. The bill guarantees support for energy conservation, renewable energy and consumer protection.

2000

LWV testified before the Pacific Northwest Power Planning Council asking that Bonneville Power Administration give priority to programs supporting energy conservation and efficiency in the use of electricity.

2001

The 2001 Legislature saw a near meltdown of **SB 1149**, the Restructuring bill passed last session. The heavily negotiated settlement kept the “public purposes” (funding for low-income users and required funding for energy conservation and renewable energy resources). LWVOR was not a player in the negotiation. At the LWVOR convention in May, delegates adopted an Informational Update of our Energy position.

2003

See [Air Quality](#) re: LWVOR opposition to HB 3652. The League opposed **HB 3652** because it added tax credits for a specific purpose without establishing any criteria for either adding or subtracting a particular tax credit.

2007

Although the League did not participate in lobbying, the Legislature enacted a number of bills which encourage the use of biofuels, increase tax credits for consumers who purchase energy efficient products and started work on addressing climate change.

2009

**SB 79** creates a Task Force on Energy Performance Scores that will develop a voluntary system for rating commercial and residential buildings for their energy efficiency.

It also requires the Department of Consumer and Business Services to adopt building codes for new residential and commercial buildings to increase energy efficiency by 10 to 25 percent by 2012 using the best available technology and construction methods.

**HB 2078**, a bill that went through the Revenue Committees rather than natural resource committees, eliminates the tax credit on gas-hybrid vehicles by January 1, 2010. Other bills extend tax incentives to buyers and manufacturers of electric plug-in cars. Oregon companies are returning unemployed autoworkers to work with plans to manufacture all parts including batteries within the state.

Passage of **HB 2181** defines eligibility and sets up energy efficiency programs for existing homes and some commercial buildings in local improvement districts. **HB 2182** expands eligibility for alternative energy project loans from fleet vehicle services to include other equipment.

**HB 2626** creates a program to encourage investment in energy efficiency projects by providing low cost loans to residential and small-scale commercial property owners. A project manager will facilitate the process and recommend options for consumers by coordinating between public and private sectors. A fund for low income projects will be established to support projects and simplify repayment for renters and homeowners.

The League was a latecomer in testifying on **HB 2940**, which would decrease Oregon's Renewable Portfolio Standard of 25% by 2025 set in 2007 (RPS) by including older biomass plants and municipal solid waste facilities. Thanks to the good work of the Marion and Polk League who had just completed a study of burning solid waste at the Brooks plant, the League sent a letter to the Governor asking for his veto of this bill, which he did on August 7. The Marion and Polk League had concerns about diluting the RPS standard and causing less investment in new renewable energy sources as well as the pollution caused by burning municipal waste.

**HB 3039** establishes a pilot program for feed-in tariffs for solar energy. However, it gives solar energy projects a double credit toward meeting the Renewable Energy Standard, which dilutes the RPS. It directs the Public Utility Commission to establish these pilot programs that will provide incentive rates and payments for electricity delivered from solar energy. League members worked hard on educating legislators on the concept of "feed-in tariffs" as an alternative to "cap and trade".

2010

The League monitored revisions to the Business Energy Tax Credit program to assure that there is a balance between encouraging new renewable energy resources and the need for revenue for important state services.

2011

**HB 3672** changes many of the energy tax credits, reducing or eliminating many in order to balance the state budget and to deal with the political fall-out of tax credit volumes significantly exceeding projections. The biggest change is that both the renewable energy tax credits and commercial energy efficiency tax credits are now grant-like programs with fees for application and a complex competition for limited dollars (\$3 M, renewable and \$28M, commercial energy efficiency). The residential energy efficiency program has a requirement that the incentive rates be changed as market conditions change.

2012

**SB 1533**, as introduced, gutted the **HB 2620** (2007) intention to have public agencies invest 1.5% of construction costs in solar energy for new construction/major remodels. The League's OCN partners amended the bill so that **SB 1533** (2012) and **HB 3169** (2013) expand renewable energy choices to include geothermal energy, but ensured that the bills remained focused on requiring additional renewable energy investments instead of diverting these dollars to any and all energy expenditures.

2013

Energy efficiency progress. The League submitted testimony on behalf of SB 692, the Energy Efficient Appliance Standard bill, and is participating in rulemaking for battery chargers, some outdoor lighting, and most television sets to match current California energy efficiency standards. The League is actively engaged in **HB 2801** rulemaking, assisting the Oregon Department of Energy to establish a standard method, statewide, for calculating voluntary Energy Performance scores and for appraisers to incorporate energy efficiency performance in home valuations. **HB 2801** builds on **SB 79** (2009), which the League supported.

Several efforts to weaken public purpose charge funding of energy efficiency were turned back by key players in the Northwest Energy Coalition (NVEC), including the League. These efforts included a proposed sweep of ~\$5 million to fund Clean Energy Works of Oregon (a statewide energy efficiency experiment that the League hopes is successful). The League signed on to a coalition letter asking the Governor to use a line item veto of the sweep; the coalition successfully argued that the public purpose charge is ratepayer money (not taxpayer money).

This move was important both on legal principle and to avoid the backlash against energy efficiency that could follow from a Portland non-profit sweeping money from low income programs statewide. The public purpose charge, established by **SB 1149** (1999) and extended by **SB 838** (2007) in the face of active opposition by the Cascade Policy Institute, collects 3% of electric bills of investor owned utility ratepayers until 2026. Seventeen percent (17%) of this charge is dedicated for renewable energy; the remainder is dedicated to energy efficiency expenditures for K-12 Public schools (10%), low income homes (16%) and other structures (57%). A portion of the low income homes fund was the target of the sweep.

The League has formally re-engaged in NWEAC by appointing a representative to the NWEAC Board.

Renewable Energy policy defense. The League participated with NWEAC and the Oregon Conservation Network (OCN) in turning back perennial challenges to the Renewable Portfolio Standard, **SB 838** (2007), aka “the RPS.” Pacific Power and Portland General Electric reported that they are on track to comply with their obligations under the RPS, with minimal to negative electricity price impacts.

Hearings on bills seeking community ownership and aggregated net metering of solar energy systems (**HB 2795**, **HB 2796** and **SB 562**) died in committee but created an opportunity for utilities to argue that existing net metering arrangements represent an inappropriate transfer of costs to other ratepayers. In response, the League has been an observer in workgroups for **HB 2893**, a bill that added 2.5 MW to the **HB 3039** (2009) Solar Incentive Pilot Program, aka “the Feed In Tariff”, and requires that the Public Utility Commission (PUC) and the Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE) study the costs and benefits of the net metering program, the feed -in -tariff program, and other solar incentive programs. The League is seeking a complete and insightful study through PUC dockets UM 1452 and UM 1673.

Governance and Funding: The League quietly supported the efforts of other organizations to turn back perennial challenges to the Energy Trust of Oregon and ODOE. **HB 2807** was amended to eliminate clauses that would have dramatically increased utility veto -power over programs and policy engagement by the agency. Governance bills that passed include **SB 230** (challenges to PUC issuance of a certificate of public necessity can now only be made at the Oregon Supreme Court by plaintiffs engaged in the original docket) and **HB 2005** (which added specialties to the Board proposing changes to Oregon’s Energy Code). **SB 306** establishes a study to propose a carbon tax.

Land Use: Solar developers simultaneously argued for consolidation of decision making at the State level (for some issues) and distribution of decision making at the County level (for other issues).

**HB 2820** established county level decision making for solar systems covering up to 320 acres.

**HB 2704** establishes criteria for construction of transmission on land zoned for exclusive farm use (EFU). **SB 693**, which prohibited transmission on EFU lands, was dead on arrival in committee.

2014

The League monitored **HB 4105** which would have moved Energy Trust of Oregon functions to the Dept. of Energy. It died in committee. We supported **SB 1570** that would have removed the sunset on Clean Fuels Program. But we couldn't get a final vote in the Senate so the bill died. The Governor instructed the Dept. of Environmental Quality to move forward with the program under the previously passed bill in hopes the sunset will be removed in 2015.

**HB 5201** budgeted \$5 million in lottery funds for Clean Energy Works of Oregon to help reduce home energy usage.

The League worked with other partners on **HB 4126** to keep a very bad measure off the ballot in November. As passed, it calls for renewable energy tariffs without more industrial energy efficiency funding and an effective delay until 2022 for renewable energy investments by small utilities.

2015

The League expressed concern related to **HB 2039**, which would have set up a Task Force to study the Columbia River Gorge Commission since we felt the Commission itself was capable of addressing the issues needing consideration to protect the Gorge. The bill died in committee.

2016

The League continues to be a member of the NW Energy Coalition.

2017

The League continues to be a member of the NW Energy Coalition.

The League supported **HB 2710**, a bill to support building code updates to meet greenhouse gas reduction goals. It died in committee.

2019

The League has formally re-engaged in the North West Energy Coalition by appointing a representative to NWECC.

2022 (*revised 2022, Peggy Lynch*)

The League was pleased that the Dept. of Energy adopted energy efficiency standards for new products.

## Natural Resources and Social Policy

### Position History and Implementation - Natural Resources and Social Policy

2020

SB 7 would have required increased rail safety after the train derailment at Mosier in the Columbia River Gorge. The League provided [testimony](#) in support. The bill had a work session in a policy committee, was referred to Rules where it died.

## Nuclear Energy

Adopted May 1980

**The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that the nuclear power program must be managed to protect current and future generations and to maintain an environment beneficial to life.**

**A. Technical uncertainties must be publicly recognized and planned for,**

**FF. Responsibility for establishing and maintaining a waste system must not be deferred to future generations, and**

**GG. Effective coordination among all levels of government - federal, state, local - and the private sector is imperative in planning and carrying out programs for transportation, waste storage, and safety, with responsibility and authority clearly designated.**

### Position History and Implementation - Nuclear Energy

1975

The LWVOR Convention voted to support the Oregon Nuclear Safeguards petition drive, which qualified for the 1976 ballot but failed at the polls. The measure would have established safety standards for nuclear power plants and safe storage and transfer of nuclear wastes and called

for liability insurance for private individuals and businesses in the event of a nuclear accident.

1977

Using the LWVUS position, League was unsuccessful with a bill which would have required builders of nuclear power plants to take financial responsibility for dismantling plants.

1987

The Hanford Nuclear Waste Board was created with a 15-member board to serve as the focal point for all Hanford related issues for Oregon. Also passed was the Pacific States Agreement on Radioactive Materials Transportation Management. The bill lays ground for interstate agreements on rules and regulations governing the transportation of radioactive materials. Through the Northwest Conservation Act Coalition, we have worked with other public interest groups to monitor Bonneville Power Administration and the Northwest Power Planning Council in administration of the act (1980 to present).

1989

We submitted testimony to the US Department of Energy regarding removal of the eight wartime reactors situated on the banks of the Columbia River.

1990-1991

The League testified before the US Department of Energy on Hanford cleanup, supporting the three-party agreement with USDOE, EPA and State of Washington for testing at Hanford. Also insisted that all money in USDOE Budget allocated for cleanups should be spent for cleanups. There is concern that recent BPA publicity about "competitiveness" indicates a return to an agency operated for the benefit of its utility and direct service industry customers, with cuts in conservation (least-cost resource) and fish and wildlife mitigation. There has been talk of an "Isaiah Project" which would use plutonium processed from Hanford nuclear waste to operate WPPSS mothballed nuclear plants #1 and #3, but it is not being considered at this time. Generators fired by natural gas, however, are being constructed for BPA and other utilities.

The Legislature passed Senate Bill 1016, which changes some Energy Facility Siting Council rules for the siting of new generating sources. An effort to combine the siting council and the Energy Policy Review Committee into an Energy Commission failed.

1993-95

Two Oregon League members were appointed to Oregon Department of Energy's Hanford Nuclear Waste Board. Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE) pressed for a role for Oregon in cleanup decisions made at Hanford, assurance that federal facilities like Hanford comply with the same federal and state laws which private businesses and all others must comply with and assurance that the ongoing cleanup of two uranium mines in Lake County, Oregon, is not delayed by changes in the Superfund law.

Several Oregon local Leagues served as focus groups in public meetings arranged by ODOE to seek public input about what to do with excess plutonium from dismantled nuclear weapons.

A state law passed by the voters in 1979, which League actively supported, prevents a utility from charging customers for a facility not producing power. Oregon's "Least Cost Planning" legislation is thought to have influenced Portland General Electric's decision to close Trojan Nuclear Facility. While the utility had successfully defeated a state ballot measure requiring the plant to be shut down, continuing problems with cracked steam pipes and high costs led PGE to stop operations on January 14, 1993.

Issues remaining are decommissioning, radioactive wastes and public safety. The Energy Facility Siting Council has asked for an independent seismic evaluation on the spent-pool at Trojan. The company's surveys indicate no hazard. "Don't Waste Oregon" is objecting to PGE sending radioactive material by barge to Hanford before its decommissioning plan has been accepted by the Nuclear Regulatory Authority.

1999

Oregon Office of Energy (formerly ODOE) continued to press (unsuccessfully) for a role for Oregon in cleanup decisions made at Hanford as well as for expeditious action in the cleanup process.

2001

LWVOR has long supported the State of Oregon's request to be a participant in Hanford site clean-up decisions. The Hanford site is potentially a source of radioactive pollution to the Columbia River. Though a "downstream" state, Oregon is still not an official participant. [See [Water: Columbia River Task Force](#)]

2017

**SB 990**, a bill that would open up Oregon to small scale nuclear reactors, had a public hearing only. The League position focuses on the need to have an answer to dealing with nuclear waste.

2018

The League is following continuing work on the Hanford Cleanup due to the potential for contamination of the Columbia River. We have also engaged with the WA League on this issue.

2019

The League continues to follow the Oregon Hanford Cleanup Board and has provided testimony this year on the importance of protecting the Columbia River.

2020

The League has a member serving on the Oregon Hanford Cleanup Board.

We provided testimony to the U.S. Dept. of Energy opposing changes to the interpretation of high-level radioactive waste. A League member was appointed to the Oregon Hanford Cleanup Board this year.

2021 (rev. 2021, Peggy Lynch)

The League began following the discovery of illegal dumping of radioactive waste at the landfill in Arlington during the 2020 session that ended with a walkout so no bills passed. However, the Oregon Dept. of Energy (ODOE) issued a Notice of Violation and ODOE immediately commenced rulemaking on areas they could legally enact. The League followed this work from the beginning and, in 2021, we supported SB 246 that clarifies the role of ODOE. The League is now engaged in rulemaking under SB 246.

2022

The League continues to serve on the Hanford Cleanup Board. We are following the issue of disposal of high-level nuclear waste. Another League member is continuing to serve on rulemaking to protect Oregon from being a dumping ground for radioactive waste.

2023 (rev. Oct. 2023, Peggy Lynch)

The League continues to serve on the Hanford Cleanup Board. See [Solid Waste](#) for more info.

2024 (rev. June 2024,, Peggy Lynch)

The League provided comments to the rules advisory committee working to implement SB 246 (2021).

## Forests

State Position (adopted May 2021)

**The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes:**

**That all benefits of the forests—ecological, human and economic—are inextricably interconnected. Healthy forests are essential to habitat for a diversity of plant and animal life, to the hydrologic cycle, and to carbon storage to mitigate global warming. In addition, healthy forests are essential to a forest products industry with the jobs and goods they provide, and to the economic and aesthetic values of their recreational opportunities. Therefore, The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports:**

**Laws and policies to ensure that forest management (for timber extraction, recreation or any other activity) is carried out in a manner that will sustain healthy forests, streams and habitats. The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that the following are essential elements of an adequate forest practices policy:**

- 1. The public must be informed and involved in the decision-making process in the development of regulations. There must be adequate public notice of forest practices permit applications, hearings, meetings and proposed actions. Public review and comment at each phase of policy and regulation development should be required. Citizens and stakeholders must be represented on the decision-making bodies;**
- 2. There must be authority and funding for enforcement of regulations. Existing land use and forest practices regulations must be monitored and enforced, and should be responsive to changing scientific knowledge. There must be coordination of regulations for public and private lands among governmental entities;**
- 3. Riparian zones are an integral part of the forest ecosystem and must be regulated adequately to protect the streams and the wildlife dependent upon the streams;**
- 4. (stet.) Education should be made available to timber owners on scientifically sound forest practices with the establishment of a small landowners' agency for this purpose;**
- 5. Environmental values of the lands proposed for trade must be considered before the economic values;**
- 6. Trained appraisers, with public oversight, must be used. The right of appeal must be available to the public;**
- 7. Full accounting of all costs, including cumulative ecological impacts, of timber harvests and other forest uses must be considered in forest activity decisions;**
- 8. Forest management must be responsive to scientific research and knowledge and should include:**
  - mapping, classification and protection of all streams,**
  - more and better data—including total watershed analysis,**
  - evaluation of cumulative effects of various activities in the forest in the consideration of individual forest practice permits, and**
  - planning for sustainability of forest ecosystems.**
  
- 9. The State should consider ecological protections the most important factor in deciding which activities to allow on state forest lands;**
  
- 10. Motorized activities should be restricted and in separate areas from non-motorized activities**

11. Forest roads must be built, maintained and decommissioned to have the least impact on the forest ecosystems. Some areas on state lands should be roadless;
12. Educate consumers about the human and ecological values of our forests as well as the opportunities and benefits of more efficient use of forest products, recycling and the use of alternatives to wood;
13. Fund independent scientific research that would include improved forest practices and ecologically sound alternatives to the use of wood;
14. Tax benefits and compensation should be considered to encourage small landowners to manage their forests in an ecologically sustainable manner;
15. Oregon schools must be fully funded with less reliance on timber harvests; and
16. Trust lands should remain in public ownership.

2013

SJM 10 asked for Congressional Action on Oregon and California lands. The League opposed since we believed the issue is part of a broad Congressional discussion and this bill supported only one of many proposals being considered. **SB 257** requires the Board of Forestry to appoint an advisory committee to study how management of federal forestlands with state or local funding might be justified.

2014

The Oregon Dept. of Forestry was allocated an additional \$40 million General Fund to pay for the 2013 fire season expenses. The League continues to bring up the issue of allowing structures in the wildland urban interface. (See Land Use.)

2015

The League supported **HB 3474** to allow for a Trust Lands Transfer of the Elliott State Forest. It did not pass, but the League continues to work with others to seek answers to keep the Forest in public hands. We provided testimony before the State Land Board on this issue and continue to work with partners. The State Land Board adopted a “Protocol” that would allow for the sale, but includes “public benefit” requirements for any offer. (See also [Coastal](#) and [Water](#) below.)

We supported a portion of the budget bill for the Dept. of Forestry (**HB 5019**) to assure public notice on aerial spray and other forest work and also water quality positions.

The League also supported increased funding for the Dept. of Forestry to update and increase electronic notice to the public regarding aerial spray and other forest events reported to them by industry.

The League offered an “Expression of Interest” to the State Land Board related to the potential sale of the Elliott State Forest in order to follow the process and have full access to all meetings.

2016

The League continues to follow the State Land Board’s “Protocol” to solicit offers for the Elliott State Forest. We have provided testimony on a number of occasions and attend meetings as we move toward a possible offer for purchase in November of 2016. The League supports public ownership of the forest.

We supported additional funding to the Dept. of Forestry to continue updating their computer systems, with a promise of full public notice access by April 2017.

2016-17

Some local League members followed **SB 892** requiring more notice around aerial spray of forestlands. The bill died in committee, but we expect this issue to come up again in 2019.

The League is meeting regularly with the Dept. of Forestry and environmental organizations on Dept. issues. See [Land Use](#) and [Offshore and Coastal Management](#) for more information on the Elliott State Forest.

2018

The League continues to follow decisions around the Elliott State Forest. We participated in an interview and comments to the facilitator hired to help the State Land Board as they work toward removing the Forest from the Common School Fund while keeping it in public hands. A Habitat Conservation Plan is being developed to help in this effort.

2019

The League continues to follow decisions around the Elliott State Forest. The legislature provided \$100 million in 2017 to “buy” environmental interests in the forest. The State Land Board is scheduled to make a decision on future management— considering authorizing Oregon State University to make it a new Research Forest in December of 2019.

They are working on a Habitat Conservation Plan for the Elliott to better understand what portion of the forest can be harvested and which should be protected for the endangered species living there. The Dept. of State Lands has a website on this issue. The League has been interviewed again on our values around the Elliott.

The Governor issued Executive Order 19-01 establishing the [Oregon Wildfire Response Council](#) and the legislature provided \$250,000 to fund this work. We expect recommendations on legislation around mitigation, suppression and recovery.

The Oregon Dept. of Forestry (ODF) is working with state and federal partner agencies to pursue a [Western Oregon State Forests Habitat Conservation Plan \(HCP\)](#). The League is following this process.

The League continues to follow the work of ODF and how the funding for fire and for recreation and other values should be addressed in our state forests. The Legislature is closely monitoring the backlog of accounts receivable (most to federal agencies) from the bad-fire years from 2013 to last year.

#### **2021** *(Revised 2021, Peggy Lynch)*

The League provided testimony in support of the Dept. of Forestry budget, **SB 5518**, to provide staffing for year round work on the agency's mission as well as wildfire assistance. We also supported positions to address climate change. We were actively engaged in the development and passage of **SB 762**, the omnibus wildfire bill that addresses many of the recommendations of the Wildfire Response Council of 2019.

The bill also requires defining the Wildland Urban Interface and mapping of same.

The League will follow the work of the Rulemaking Advisory Committee as they implement this important legislation. We had also supported **SB 248**, another version of a wildfire bill. The League did NOT support **HB 2722**, another version of a wildfire bill.

LWVOR provided testimony on **HB 2070**, the biennial harvest tax bill. We worked to find fair and reasonable taxation, but no bill on this taxation passed in 2021. **HB 2379** would have provided a severance tax instead. The League supported the -7 amendment to the bill but it, too, did not pass.

The League provided comments on **SB 335 with the -3 amendment**, a bill that would change the composition of the Board of Forestry. The bill did not pass.

The League followed work at the Dept. of Forestry on a Habitat Conservation Plan and Forest Management Plan for State Forests.

The League provided testimony regarding a new Memorandum of Understanding between ODF and DEQ. The MOU was adopted by the ODF Board and DEQ Commission.

The League provided testimony in support of a definition for the wildland urban interface (WUI) as recommended by the SB 762 Rules Advisory Committee. It was adopted by the Board of Forestry. We also provided comments on ODF's Climate Change and Carbon Plan.

The League and conservation groups continue to meet regularly with ODF staff.

2022

League members follow the work of the Dept. of Forestry and the Board of Forestry year round. We were supportive of the Private Forest Accord (PFA) between timber interests and conservationists and supported the passage of **SB 1501**, **SB 1502** and **HB 4055** (the harvest tax bill that includes additional credits related to the PFA).

The League engaged in development and passage of **SB 1546**, a bill that creates the Elliott State Research Forest. The League followed the guidance of our testimony from beginning 10 years ago where we looked for a balance between environmental protection with limited logging.

2023 (*Revised Oct. 2023, Peggy Lynch*)

League members follow the work of the Dept. of Forestry, attending meetings between the agency and the conservation community regularly. We provided [testimony](#) on the Oregon Dept. of Forestry **budget (HB 5020)**, expressing concern that staffing for climate change issues around forest management and urban forestry weren't included in the Governor's budget. Those positions were not included in the final budget. However, [HB 3409](#) includes a provision that directs ODF to acquire and maintain an urban tree canopy assessment tool and to develop and implement a program related to loss of tree canopy and DLCD was given over \$7 million and 5 staff to create and award grants under a new Community Green Infrastructure Fund.

LWVOR provided [comments](#) on the biennial Harvest Tax bill, [HB 2087](#), expressing concerns but supporting if this bill is all that is available for helping fund forestry programs. The bill passed and signed by the Governor on July 31<sup>st</sup>.

The League provided [testimony](#) in support of funding for the Oregon Conservation Corps in [HB 5025](#), the omnibus Higher Education Coordinating Commission budget bill. \$10 million was provided in the end-of-session bill, [SB 5506](#).

LWVOR provided [testimony](#) in support of [SB 80](#) with the -2 amendments, a refinement of certain aspects of [SB 762](#), the Omnibus Wildfire Legislation of 2021. The League monitored [SB 82](#), which enhances insurance carriers' obligation to consider property owner's efforts to reduce wildfire risk in rate-setting and policy coverage decisions and increases information available to policy-holders.

The League followed [SB 509](#), which would have required the Oregon Department of Forestry to study community-based programs for reducing wildfire risk, among other things, and would declare an emergency upon passage so that grant fundings and other program items would have begun immediately. LWVOR provided [support](#) for SB 509 A. The bill did not pass. However, there was some funding provided in the Oregon State Fire Marshal's budget at end of session.

Throughout the session, the League followed closely the work of the Governor's [Wildfire Programs Advisory Council](#), which makes recommendations regarding wildfire legislation to the Governor and the Legislature.

2024 (Revised June 2024, Peggy Lynch)

The League sent a letter in support of Alternatives 2 and 3 of the Western Oregon State Forests Habitat Conservation Plan. The plan was approved by the Board of Forestry.

The League continues to follow the Wildfire Programs Advisory Council's work, including their concern related to sustainable funding for wildfire prevention, protection and response.

Three wildfire funding bills were introduced during the session. SB 1593 would repeal the forest products harvest tax and impose a new version of the timber severance tax. The League supported. HB 4133 would have made changes to the current forest products harvest tax. HJR 201 and HB 4075 would have asked Oregonians to pay up to \$0.25 per \$1,000 property tax value for public safety funding. The League followed but did not weigh in on these bills. None of the bills passed. However, the Dept. of Forestry is to set up a Work Group to investigate alternative means of funding wildfire.

The League supported SB 1511, a bill that would have created a Neighborhood Protection Cooperatives Grant Program and would have directed the Dept. of Business and Consumer Services to work with insurance companies as communities participate in wildfire risk reduction programs. The bill did not pass. The League signed on to a separate budget request for additional monies to the State Fire Marshal's Office and Dept. of Forestry to address Community Wildfire Protection and Landscape Resiliency. The monies were not included in the final budget bill.

The League followed other bills related to wildfire and will be following the new hazard map process this year.

2025 (Rev. Sept. 2025 Peggy Lynch)

The League continues to follow the new Elliott State Research Forest Board. Separately, we follow the Oregon State Board of Forestry. League members also follow wildfire issues, including funding for suppression and mitigation. Among the groups LWVOR follows is the Wildfire Programs Advisory Council.

The League provided [comments](#) to the Board of Forestry on Climate Change and Carbon Plan Implementation.

The League [opposed HB 3103](#) and the [-1 amendment](#), a bill that would have directed the State Forester to determine the available state forestland, establish sustainable harvest levels for harvesting timber on state forestland and manage available state forestland. The League noted that, under current law in ORS 530.050, “the State Forester shall manage State forestlands...so as to secure the greatest permanent value of those lands to the state...”. The bill did not pass.

The League provided written [comments](#) and [verbal testimony](#) on Feb. 4 on [HB 2072](#), the biennial bill that extends certain taxes on the privilege of harvesting merchantable forest products on forestlands. Per below, the League supports returning to a severance tax. The bill was amended and passed.

The League [supported HB 3489](#) and [again](#) with the [-1 amendment](#), a bill that would have changed forest harvest taxation to a severance tax on owners of timber harvested from public or private forestland instead of the current harvest tax. League members have worked on this concept for a number of years to find new sources of revenue to for forest regulation and local governments. The bill did not pass.

The League was disappointed that legislation passed ([SB 83](#)) to remove the wildfire hazard map that was meant to provide property owners and the state on best practices and locations for state investment to help prevent future wildfires, but were pleased by the passage of [SB 85](#), a bill related to policies for community-based wildfire risk mitigation to reduce wildfire risks.

The League monitored the omnibus wildfire funding bill, [HB 3940](#). The bill passed after amendments. Although there is money for the Dept. of Forestry and the State Fire Marshal, there is also money for mitigation. Although the Flat Fire, two miles northeast of Sisters, lost a few homes, the saving of over 1,400 homes was credited with the mitigation done well before the fire.

# Hard Rock Mining

## State Position *(ratified May 2022)*

**The League of Women Voters of Oregon recognizes society's need for key minerals, and also the potential harmful environmental, health, and human impacts that mining for these minerals can produce.**

**Currently there is little hard rock mining in Oregon, and much of Oregon's topography is not well-suited to mining. However, minerals such as gold, silver, copper, lead, zinc, nickel, and uranium have been mined in the past, and these and new minerals such as lithium may be mined in the future in Oregon.**

**Hard rock mining in Oregon is governed by a complex and interconnected set of federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and permitting processes, which include provisions for environmental protection, economic evaluation, and reclamation of mining sites.**

**The League supports an approach to the overall regulation and oversight of hard rock mining that will:**

1. **Modify leasing and permitting decision criteria to eliminate the dominance of mineral rights over alternate public land uses, environmental protection, and of ecosystem services such as biodiversity and climate regulation.**
2. **Improve leasing, permitting, and oversight processes to assure ample opportunities for public disclosure and stakeholder comment.**
3. **Modernize standards for policy review to ensure adequate protection of health, safety, other industries, air, water, habitats, and ecosystem services, and require mining operations on public lands to comply with all environmental regulations.**
4. **Establish procedures to protect specific areas of critical environmental concern, for example, by allowing states, political subdivisions, or stakeholder groups to petition to exclude mining in special areas, and/or provide for expedited review of areas that may be inappropriate for mining.**

**Further, the League would support reforms to federal mining laws and practices that will:**

1. **Effectively repeal the directive in the Hard Rock Mining Law of 1872 that hard rock mining take precedence over all other uses of public lands.**
2. **Strengthen and enforce mining financial responsibility requirements, so that they (a) compensate taxpayers for industry resource extraction on public lands, by establishing a system of permitting, leasing and royalty fees for domestic and foreign mining exploration, extraction, and revenues; and (b) establish funding mechanisms and procedures to reclaim mining sites, restore ecosystems adversely affected by mining operations, remediate environmental degradation, and provide for long-term monitoring.**

**Finally, the League supports changes in Oregon's laws and practices that will:**

1. **Strengthen existing statutory provisions for mine operators' reclamation bonds or alternative security, particularly as they relate to long-term site care and monitoring needs and ensure that permits issued by the Department of Geology and Mineral Industries include the costs of department oversight and review.**
2. **Enhance opportunities for public input concerning mining on public lands, and adopt policies that support and encourage public participation in actions that may impact the State's environmental resources and local economies.**
3. **Promote and incentivize recycling programs that reduce consumption and support reuse and recycling of non-renewable virgin metal minerals, in order to reduce the mining and extraction of these materials and to protect**

**and conserve other environmental and natural resources; adopt legislation that establishes metal recycling patterned after Oregon’s E-Cycles Program. Among the objectives of a metal recycling program would be: (a) developing consumer information and education on the economic and environmental value of reuse and recycling of metals; (b) providing free recycling at widely dispersed collection sites throughout the State; (c) promoting state and regional processing sites for refurbishment, recovery, and reuse of metal materials; and (d) funding DEQ administration and monitoring compliance at collection and processing sites.**

2023

The League continues to follow the [Grassy Mountain Gold Project](#) in Malheur County, using a streamlined permitting process. On Oct. 4, the Consolidated Permit Application was deemed complete. There is at least another year of process before the project begins. The League continues to follow this streamlined process to determine if it is both efficient for the applicant and the agencies and better for public engagement.

2024 (Rev. June 2024, Peggy Lynch)

LWVOR signed a [letter](#) written by a coalition of environmental groups and submitted written [testimony](#) supporting SB 1596, a bill to require manufacturers of electronic devices to make the means of repair of those devices available to consumers and independent repair providers. Extending the life of electronic devices will reduce waste, greenhouse gas emissions and raw material usage. The bill was signed by the Governor.

2025 (Rev. Sept. 2025 Peggy Lynch)

The League continues to follow the [Grassy Mountain Gold Project](#) in Malheur County, using a streamlined permitting process and we often attend the multi-agency meetings around the proposed permit. In May the federal government listed the project as important and will focus on quick processing of federal permits.

## Hazardous Materials

### National Position

### Position Implementation—Hazardous Materials

1987

Two of the three bills that the League supported were passed: (1) a superfund bill to set aside funds to clean up hazardous waste sites not eligible for federal monies; (2) a bill regulating and inspecting underground storage tanks (LUST) passed though not with our amendment which would have listed the location of the tanks in the public record. An Emergency Response Plan bill did not pass but an amendment to the LUST bill allows local firefighters to enter into cooperative emergency response plans with the DEQ.

1999

Initially **HB 2431** was a bill designed to overturn Eugene's Toxic Right-to-Know ordinance. The bill as passed requires a Right-to-Know Technical Committee to develop a plan to improve public access to hazardous and toxic substance data. It also sets conditions for local

"community right-to-know" laws.

2001

The Senate refused to hear a House-passed bill (HB 2010) that would have exempted owners of the Willamette River Super Fund site in the Portland harbor from paying for

the cleanup of their own pollution. LWVOR opposed this bill. [See [Air Quality](#) for SB 764 – Pollution Facility Tax Credits.]

1999

See [Air Quality](#), [Energy Conservation](#) and [Water Quality](#) re: **HB 3652**. In addition, the League unsuccessfully opposed SB 751 dealing with the clean-up of the Portland Harbor Superfund Site because it duplicates an on-going process and potentially threatens the “polluter pays” concept underlying federal Superfund legislation.

2014

The League supported **HJM 201** asking the U. S. Congress to expedite improved standards for new and existing crude oil carrying rail tank cars. It passed.

2015

The League supported the original **HB 3225**, addressing oil train safety. The bill was significantly amended, but provides money to the State Fire Marshall to coordinate outreach, develop a spill response plan, etc. **SB 262** increases fees for an oil spill prevention program and **SB 271** that requires the Oregon Department of Transportation, by rule, to establish a state safety oversight program that applies to rail systems in Oregon that are not subject to regulation for the Federal Railroad Administration. The Governor was authorized a new position of State Resiliency Officer to coordinate agencies around hazards issues.

2017

The League supported **HB 2131**, the Community Protection and Preparedness Act, to address oil train safety. Due to lack of support by train companies and concern around legalities with interstate transportation, the bill died in Ways and Means.

2018

The League provided testimony in support of **HB 4004** related to the safe transport of hazardous substances including fossil fuels. Both this House bill and the Senate bill addressing oil rail safety again died. Work will continue in hopes of passing a bill in 2019.

2021 *(revised 2021, Peggy Lynch)*

The League supported **HB 3269**, a bill that would have required a study of DEQ's Emergency Response Program. The bill did not pass and no monies were provided for this important public safety program. We also engaged in radioactive waste issues (See [Hanford](#))

2022

The League continues to engage in rulemaking on radioactive waste.

2023 (revised Oct. 2023, Peggy Lynch)

The League held a seat on the two RACs involved to date engaged in rulemaking at the Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE) as it addresses its work to protect Oregon from acceptance, accumulation, and storage of hazardous levels of radioactive waste. We remain concerned that the industry may have too much influence in the proposed rules rather than protecting Oregonians' health and safety.

## Land Use

Adopted May 1995; Educational Update 2002\*

### Citizen Participation

**Citizen participation, education, communication and ongoing reevaluation are essential elements in the comprehensive planning process. Recognizing the need for effective citizen participation, the League of Women Voters of Oregon believes the following factors should be considered in establishing citizen advisory groups in all jurisdictions within the state involved in land use planning:**

1. Representation on a broad socioeconomic, geographic and occupational basis.
2. Appointment for a specific project with specified goals and terms, and provision for an adequate orientation to the purposes of the agency.
3. Provision for communication among citizens, citizen advisory groups and planning agencies.

**The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports appointment of Citizen Involvement Committees (CICs), separate from planning commissions, to assist local governing bodies with their citizens' involvement programs.**

### Regional and Urban Growth

**The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports a system of local government based upon constitutional home rule for metropolitan districts, counties and cities. The League recognizes certain principles of good local government. These are:**

1. Democratic representation and control.
2. Basic simplicity with power to plan for future growth or change.
3. Consideration of the interdependence of land use, transportation and environmental quality in all comprehensive plans.

**The League supports the establishment of a regional government in an area where planning and delivery of services can be more efficiently and economically provided by such a government.**

### **Statewide Planning**

**The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports the Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) as the statewide planning agency. We also support the 19 statewide land use goals.**

**The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports policies that promote both conservation and development of land as a natural resource, in accordance with Oregon's land use goals. Applying this principle, the League believes:**

- **The state should have the prime responsibility for establishing statewide planning goals and for supervising and coordinating comprehensive land use plans, with participation by citizens and by local and regional governments.**
- **The state, with citizen participation, should identify, regulate and enforce areas of critical statewide concern.**
- **Consideration of accurate information concerning water availability and quality should be a prime factor when making land use decisions.**
- **Taxation and assessment policies should support comprehensive land use plans.**

**The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports protection of private property rights commensurate with overall consideration of public health and environmental protection.**

\*Updated for background information only – no position change.

### **Position History and Implementation - Land Use**

League study of land use started with urban growth, gradually worked its way through regional growth, and now includes support for state planning of land and water resources.

1959

LWVOR Convention adopted a four-year study of the state's role in the problems of urban growth. It became increasingly apparent that the problems of growth are beyond the jurisdiction of local government and require planning and implementation on an expanded geographical scale.

1969

Convention adopted a regional growth study focused on comprehensive planning, regional planning in its relationship to Council of Governments and boundary boards, and the effectiveness of citizen advisory groups. The next step was an evaluation of land use in Oregon.

1963-71

League supported legislation for the creation (1963) and extension (1969) of the Portland area Metropolitan Study Commission. Also in the 1969 legislative session, we supported the formation of Local Government Boundary Commissions for Portland, Eugene, and Salem metro areas as well as enabling legislation for the establishment of Metropolitan Service Districts. Boundary Commissions are commissions in charge of regional land and water issues. It was during the 1969 sessions that the League of Women Voters of Oregon began its activity in land use by supporting a bill requiring all counties to adopt comprehensive plans. We based our support on our air and water pollution positions. In 1971 we supported a bill allowing metropolitan service districts to increase the services they could provide and to utilize more methods of financing those services. We also supported a resolution creating a commission to study county reorganization and enabling legislation for city-county consolidation in the Portland area.

1973

LWVOR Convention adopted a two-year study that emphasized private and public rights and responsibilities. Land use legislation dominated the 1973 session. League supported adoption of **SB 100**, which created the Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) and Department (DLCD). The Commission, appointed by the governor, was directed to formulate statewide planning goals to be followed by city and county governments in developing local comprehensive plans. The bill included provisions for state review of local plans and widespread citizen involvement.

1975

League members at the Convention approved a two-year study of water resources as related to land use since the use of land without water is limited. Delegates felt an evaluation and study of water resources, present and future, a projection of present and future uses, and our laws governing those uses were imperative. From this study came increased understanding of conflicts over future water uses and demands.

1975-79

Few changes in land use laws occurred during the 1975 session.

However, during the unsuccessful attempt to repeal SB 100 in 1976, the governor and some legislators decided fine-tuning of that law was needed. The League worked closely with a number of organizations to see that the legislation (SB 570), while responding to some of the concerns about the implementation of the state's program, did not overly weaken it. Although in 1978 there was another unsuccessful ballot measure to weaken Oregon's land use program, the only significant piece of land use legislation, adopted during the 1979 session was SB 435, which established the Land Use Board of Appeals. This board, appointed by the governor, handles land use appeals formerly heard by LCDC or the Circuit Courts. Appeals from this body are to the Court of Appeals of Oregon.

1981

Since the 1973 Land Use Act (**SB 100**) was silent on what happened after local plans had been acknowledged by LCDC, the Legislature dealt with this post- acknowledgment issue. The League worked actively along with many other groups to win support for close state monitoring of amendments to and implementation of local comprehensive plans.

Although the adopted bill (**HB 2225**) did not provide for as strong a state role as we wanted, it did establish a procedure for the periodic review of comprehensive plans as well as state review of plan amendments. Opposed by League in the 1981 session was a "lot of record" bill that would have prohibited counties from denying building permits for preexisting lots in unincorporated areas. The version finally adopted was far more restrictive, limiting eligibility to lots created between 1965 and 1975 that had not received special assessments for farm or forest use for five or more years.

League unsuccessfully opposed **HB 2521**, which took away an existing city's veto power over the incorporation of a new city within its urban growth boundary. The legislation applies only to metropolitan areas. The 1981 session also saw increased pressure by the timber industry to limit the protection of goal resources (e.g., fish and wildlife habitat, natural areas, watersheds) on forestland. The League was represented in a group that tried without success to resolve this issue.

1983-85

Since 1982 saw yet another attempt to scuttle LCDC via the ballot box (which League actively opposed), the 1983 Legislature responded to a governor's Land Use Task Force report by struggling again with major land use legislation. The bill that was finally adopted (HB 2295) provided for more emphasis on economic development, for the acknowledgment of all local plans by July 1984, for a streamlined appeal process, and for a speedier local government permit process.

The Marginal Lands Bill (SB 237) was also followed closely by League. The bill, as adopted, offers counties the option of hobby farm and small woodlot development in areas with poorer soils or existing small ownerships in exchange for more restrictive criteria for dwellings in exclusive farm use areas. The bill also relaxed somewhat the 1981 "lot of record" provisions by granting building permit eligibility to lots created between 1948 and 1975 and to all legally created lots in marginal land areas. League closely followed LCDC's amendments of the four Coastal Goals to help ensure that protection of our coastal resources was not weakened.

The League also spoke against deep-sea mining of Gorda Ridge off the southern Oregon coast until adequate research on the impacts of such mining has been carried out. [See [Coastal Management Position](#).] The League was successful in both areas.

The League is continuing to monitor the citing of destination resorts on or near resource lands.

1985

Little legislation was passed in the land use area this session. The major bill was one to require compensation for land use regulations (SB 633). The battle was hard fought and resulted in an interim study of the issue by the Joint Legislative Committee on Land Use with a report back to the 1987 Legislature, which took no action.

1985-87

League participated in two major issues between the 1985 and 1987 sessions. One is the proposed hydroelectric project by the City of Klamath Falls in the Salt Caves area of the Klamath River. The League joined many organizations in opposing the project. Although the project would adversely impact scenic, recreational, archaeological and fish and wildlife resources, the League's emphasis has been on the conflict with the Klamath County comprehensive plan and the state's land use planning process. We continue to follow the issue. The other major issue was the adequacy of the Board of Forestry's rules for timber harvest to protect significant natural resources and to meet the LCDC goals. The League testified several times before the board on the need for stricter rules.

1987

The major land use issue was the exemption of timber harvest operations from Oregon's Land Use Act. With intervention from the governor's office, the resolution was a long sought reconstitution of the Board of Forestry to end its dominance by the timber industry in exchange for exemption of timber operations from LCDC oversight and local government regulation.

Instead, the Board of Forestry must adopt rules to protect significant natural resources on forestland. The League will continue to follow the issue with, we hope, more positive results than we've had so far. The Portland area and Lane County Boundary Commissions came perilously close to being abolished.

League opposition had little effect but a threatened veto by the governor did. The compromise was appointment of the Portland Commission by Metro rather than the governor and in Lane County exemption of special districts not using Boundary Commission services for two years from assessments to support the Commission.

League also worked to improve and then supported a bill for a pilot project to establish wetland mitigation banks to be overseen by the Division of State Lands. The purpose of these banks is to create or recreate wetlands large enough to be biologically productive rather than mitigate on a small, scattered-site basis when wetlands are damaged or destroyed by needed development and on-site mitigation is impossible, e.g., highway projects. The bill requires the adoption of rules to set standards and criteria for the site selection process, operation and evaluation of these banks and specifically requires consideration of fish and wildlife, water quality, recreation, and scientific and research values.

1988

In the May primary, the League supported a ballot measure authorizing water development loan funding for fish protection and watershed restoration. In the November election the League supported a ballot measure to designate more intersections as scenic waterways. The League also by now was actively involved in the Salt Caves hydroelectric project controversy in Klamath County, stressing the need for consideration of land use procedures and environmental concerns. The League also submitted comments to the United States Forest Service on Willamette National Forest Plan.

1989

Except for a mini furor over LCDC's budget, land use was quiet in the Legislature. However, the League submitted comments on LCDC's attempts to amend its Forest and Agricultural Lands Goals and Rules in response to court decisions, and on increasing complaints about over-regulation of resource lands. Using the LWVUS land use position, League became involved in offshore development activities. We worked for postponement of Oregon and Washington lease sales and more consideration of environmental concerns and natural resource protection prior to exploration and development. We supported bills in the Legislature to increase liability coverage for oil vessels in Oregon's territorial sea and to establish an oil spill response plan.

[See [Coastal Management Position](#).]

1990

The League continued to follow LCDC's attempts to address the "secondary" land problem, which became increasingly controversial with the establishment of Oregonians in Action, an organization questioning LCDC's authority and Oregon's Land Use Act.

1991

League supported **SB 91**, one of the many bills introduced to deal with the secondary lands issues. It was the only bill that would harbor adequately protected valuable resources lands while allowing for some development on less significant rural land. Although a major issue for the session to resolve, nothing passed.

1993

A major rewrite of Oregon's Land Use Act was introduced in the Legislature (**HB 3661**) and opposed by the League. Those wanting fewer restrictions and less state control over housing on agricultural and forest resource lands had majority support in the House. However, in the closing days of the session, a version that loosens restrictions only on less important resource land was approved by the Senate and agreed to by the House. When the members of the LWVOR reviewed LWVOR positions in 1992-93, many local Leagues felt it was time to restudy LWVOR land use positions.

At the 1993 Convention, the LWVOR delegates voted to have a one-year study of land use issues. Six months into the study the Land Use Study Committee requested an extension from the LWVOR Board to make the restudy into a two-year program. The committee found there had been a lot of changes in land use since the issue was previously studied, with many new issues emerging. Based on these changes, new positions were recommended to the membership for concurrence and adopted in the spring of 1995.

1994-95

Oregon's November 1994 election heralded a serious attack on land use laws in both the House and Senate. In excess of 100 bills were introduced, which would have destroyed key features in Oregon's 19 State Wide Planning Goals. Special interest groups seriously threatened opportunities for citizen involvement in land use decisions. Numerous bills were intended to weaken the authority of both LCDC and DLCD. Current protection of prime farm and forest land was in jeopardy. (See May 1995 LWVOR positions.)

Both state and local Leagues joined the battle to save Oregon's nationally acclaimed land use laws. LWVOR joined with 70 other environmental groups in an association called the Oregon Conservation Network to exchange information and to coordinate the effort to defeat this avalanche of special interest legislation. Most destructive bills were defeated within the legislative halls or were vetoed by Governor Kitzhaber.

Overall Oregon's land use laws remain intact, but were weakened. Example: Owners of historic sites, properly designated by Goal 5 processes at the city, the county, and/or state level can refuse the historic designation no matter how significant the site may be historically. Individual property rights were changed to prevail over governing bodies and the desires of the community. Goal 5 environmental provisions relative to aggregate mining laws, wetlands, and open spaces were weakened. The League has and will continue to testify on administrative rule changes now under way by LCDC and DLCD relative to 1995 adopted legislation.

1997

The LWVOR Action Committee was greatly affected by the sudden death of the State League's Land Use Chair. The new Chair quickly stepped into action. During the session, the League lobbied successfully to defeat **HB 2643**, a bill barring the Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) and the Department (DLCD) from direct appeal of decisions by Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA). This bill hit the statewide authority of the commission and department directly. **SB 500**, denying municipalities the right to vote on annexations, was defeated in the Senate on the last day of the session.

This was a major priority for the League and is expected to be a repeated battle in the 1999 legislative session. This measure was a direct attack on the right of communities to determine their own future. The right to vote on annexations is not a substitute for the land use process, but can only occur after the land use process is completed. The League supported adding "schools" to the other five categories for which municipalities may charge "systems development charges," charges which a city may establish to help pay for new capital investments required by new development.

While this addition never made it out of the committee, at least the systems development charge was clearly established as a fee, not a tax. As a fee, such a charge would fall under either Measure 47 or 50 tax limitations.

The League tried unsuccessfully to restore full funding for the Columbia Gorge Commission.

1999

The League recognizes that citizen participation is important throughout the land use planning process and may under some circumstances involve a community vote concerning annexation. [See [Constitutional Provisions](#), Local Government.]

An anticipated attack on Oregon's land use law, requiring compensation for land use regulation, never materialized. Several bills were introduced; none were heard. A number of direct attacks on the Land Use System were vetoed by the governor: **SB 474** requiring land use regulations be "least restrictive"; **HB 3282** allowing siting of urban churches in Exclusive Farm Use Zones; **HB 3259** allowing schools in urban reserves. A number of bills were aimed at exemptions for local governments from statewide planning requirements. The League opposed **SB 543**, which initially exempted all counties from periodic review. The final bill, which was signed by the governor, only exempts certain small cities. This bill "specifies" that the focus of periodic review should be on "housing, employment, transportation and public facilities and services". Also signed by the governor was **SB 615** granting certain cities exemption from the Statewide Transportation Goal.

2000

In November, voters passed Ballot Measure 7, which requires state and local government to pay compensation if a law or regulation reduces property value. The League worked in coalition with other organizations to defeat the measure.

2001

LWVOR weighed in on changes to Goal 14 Rules (Urbanization). The issue was how to protect rural residential areas from urbanization. Goal 14 Rules, which ultimately were approved, included provisions for "clustering." LWVOR opposed this arguing that "clustering" is a useful concept – but is an "urban" concept and not appropriate for rural residential areas. We further argued that 10 acres be established as minimum lot size for rural residential.

LWVOR strongly objected to "grandfathering" lots-of-record – which LWVOR has opposed many, many times in the past. Several bills would have required local governments to allow churches or schools outside of the Urban Growth Boundary. Local government should have the authority to consider whether the need to give up agricultural use of lands for such purposes is necessary. (**SB 470**, **SB 3026**.)

LWVOR supported giving local government the right to add schools to the five categories for which they may assess system development charges. No legislation passed either house.

At the LWVOR Convention in May, delegates adopted an Information Update on our Land Use position.

LWVOR gave testimony before the House Land Use & Regulatory Fairness Committee supporting guiding principles dealing with implementation of Ballot Measure 7 (passed by voters in November 2000). The principles include fairness, support for land use system, as well as public participation. LWVOR opposed **HB 3998**, which was a biased bill that would have either bankrupt the state or destroyed statewide land use planning or both. The Committee disbanded without voting out **HB 3998**. Measure 7 legislation never made it to the floor of either house.

2003

The League opposed **SB 538** which would have statutorily abolished Oregon's statewide land use planning program. This bill failed as did **HB 2137**, the only "takings" bill of the session. **HB 2137** would have required compensation for perceived regulatory takings.

LWVOR also opposed **HB 2912** which would have legislatively established a review of land use planning in Oregon. This "reform" bill failed. The Speaker of the House then appointed a House interim committee charged with dealing with Land Use Reform.

LWVOR presented extensive testimony before the Columbia River Gorge Commission regarding review of the Scenic Resource Chapter implementing the federal Scenic Area Act.

On the legal front, the League, as a party represented by 1000 Friends of Oregon, asked the Supreme Court to review an adverse opinion by the state Court of Appeals. The Supreme Court denied the appeal, retaining the legal interpretation that limits standing in land use court cases to only those with a legally protected interest – contrary to land use law which gives standing to those who have participated in the process.

The most controversial land use issue this session was clearly the aggregate issue, pitting gravel quarries against prime farm land and farm practices. Beginning as an industry bill, **HB 3018** failed in an unsuccessful conference committee. This is considered a priority economic issue, an environmental issue, and a land use issue. LWVOR adamantly opposed **HB 3018** which would have prioritized gravel extraction over agricultural use of land.

2005

The passing of Ballot Measure 37 in November 2004 created havoc for Oregon's statewide land use program. The League opposed both the initiative and the ballot measure. Efforts made by both the 2005 Senate and the House to clarify the ballot measure failed. The League supported some of the proposals but opposed "transferability", a concept that would have allowed a Measure 37 waiver to be attached to the land, unlike Measure 37 that made the measure exclusive to the owner at the time of the claim.

In October of 2005, the Marion County Circuit Court declared the Measure unconstitutional and denied a petition to stay that ruling.

The court's action froze all claims for waivers or compensation for regulatory actions decreasing the value of property at the state government level and for the four counties that were defendants in the lawsuit. The decision was appealed to the Oregon Supreme Court and in March 2006 the court upheld Measure 37.

In addition to involvement with Measure 37 legislation, the League opposed measures that would have legislatively changed Statewide Land Use Planning Goals. Of particular concern was a proposal to gut the process specified in Goal 2 for taking an "exception" to any given Goal requirement. The League also supported a bill, which did pass, for a 4-year review of Oregon Statewide Land Use Planning Program.

The League opposed measures that would have limited or abolished the state's Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA). The League unsuccessfully opposed a special interest measure that allowed Dorothy English, one of the chief sponsors of Ballot Measure 37, to divide her Portland property despite local land use restrictions. A number of bills proposing radical changes in the appointment, composition and authority of the Land Conservation and Development Commission were opposed by the League, passed the House, but never were heard in the Senate.

2006

After supporting **SB 82** in 2005 with great hope for a broad public conversation about our statewide land use planning program with local implementation, the League was disappointed with **HB 2229** as originally filed. We provided testimony and worked with others to assure we both protected our forest and farmland and supported livable communities throughout Oregon. In the end, we were neutral on the final bill, which provides a process for corrective remapping of rural lands by counties if they also update natural resource protections; addresses issues with regional problem solving;

adds 4 guiding principles having no force of law; and encourages other actions that are unlikely to go forward without monies available.

A disappointment was not getting passage of **HB 2227**, which would have allowed the Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) to review Goal 8 and the rules surrounding the siting of destination resorts. Issues to be considered were how these resorts affect all surrounding jurisdictions' transportation systems, addressing firefighting concerns and assuring workforce housing for these resorts. Some legislators were concerned about losing legislative leadership on this issue and turning the work over to LCDC. Since the League has worked hard to assure that LCDC's meetings and work projects have a full and open public process, we will have to work harder to convince legislators that LCDC has one of the most open processes in the state on rulemaking. We were one vote short in the House. A Work Group has been appointed to see if a compromise bill can be filed either in the February 2010 session or in 2011.

A number of bills were submitted related to the protection of the Metolius Basin. The League testified in support of **HB 3100** while expressing our view that Areas of Statewide Concern should be designated before specific development proposals are considered. **HB 3298** was "gutted and stuffed" and became the final bill that sets the basin as the first Area of Critical Statewide Concern and requires LCDC to manage the area under their adopted plan.

**HB 2228** is a good example of how legislation takes many turns. The original bill was offered by DLCD to allow a transfer of development rights program. This bill eventually offered the Metolian Project developers alternative siting for the project they had wanted to place in the Metolius Basin. It also statutorily affirmed an agreement among parties related to the Skyline Forest in the Bend area, where development rights will be transferred from forestland (keeping 1,800 acres in forest use) while allowing a 282-unit development on one end of the property. **HB 3313** added additional guidance for both the Metolius Basin **HB 3298** and **HB 2228**.

The League supported **SB 763**, which provides for a voluntary process to transfer development rights from a willing owner of property, such as agriculture and forestland, to property within urban growth boundaries and urban reserves. The Oregon Conservation Strategy will play an important role in this effort since such transfers should also help preserve important natural areas. This program will provide revenue for the seller and the opportunity to increase development by the buyer. There are matching federal funds available under the 2008 Farm Bill's Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program that might be used under this program.

**HB 3099** reduces some uses allowed on farmland, including golf courses, urban schools (schools that serve rural populations are still allowed) and solid waste disposal sites. The League testified to be sure that aggregate mining on high value farmland was not expanded. The bill also allows counties to adopt these changes without a full public hearing process, since local governments must comply with state legislation. After original testimony, the League stayed silent on the plethora of amendments.

The League continues to follow aggregate issues and works to find a balance between the demand for aggregate and the need to protect our natural resources. We expressed concern with **HB 2929** that, on the one hand, supports independent studies of individual rivers and streams while, on the other hand, allows third party interests to fund the studies.

It is critical that these studies, which may affect the quality of these waters, be truly independent and trusted by the general public as well as providing answers to industry. As a result of our work, the bill was modified; however, we will need to monitor this effort.

Bills such as **SB 191**, **SB 599** and **HB 2155** made minor amendments to aggregate and removal/fill issues. League members read and reviewed these and other bills related to this important issue.

The League opposed **SB 467**, which would have changed the approval criteria for single family dwellings. We also opposed **HB 2225**, a proposal by the LCDC to allow urban growth boundary expansions for “affordable housing”. We continue to believe that affordable housing should be placed close to services and public transportation within our communities, and we encouraged rulemaking and consideration of inclusionary zoning to address this important issue. Both bills died in committee.

The League continues to attend the State Land Board meetings, and members participate in committees of the Department of State Lands. The distribution policy for the Common School Fund was amended during the session that increased the amount allocated to our K-12 schools. Aggregate income goes to the Fund as do timber sales from state lands.

LCDC has adopted its Policy Agenda for 2009-11. Among the issues they will work on include revising the Territorial Sea Plan; adopting rules to establish targets for the Metro area related to greenhouse gas reductions; preparing legislative action related to the other five metropolitan planning organizations dealing with land use and

transportation, adopting rules to implement a transfer of development rights program; and beginning to assist communities in preparing for the effects of global warming, specifically focusing on mitigation and adaptation.

2007

The League opposed a number of bills that would have allowed individual projects/ properties to subvert the local process, including **SB 665**. That bill became a compromise measure allowing a Morrow County auto speedway to expand without consideration of Goals 3, 11 and 14, but requiring a local public review process.

Two bills related to aggregate mining were passed after work behind the scenes by the League: SB 149 enhances the ability of the Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries (DOGAMI) to modify and enforce operating permits and reclamation plans for aggregate mining. **SB 544** directs DSL to investigate feasibility of establishing a certification program for professional wetland scientists.

In addition, the League supported **HB 3461** that would have protected Class I and II soils from aggregate mining, but it had only one committee hearing. **HB 3557**, a “gut and stuff” of **HB 3461**, had a courtesy hearing near the end of the session in another committee. Both hearings had considerable testimonial support for the concept.

The League supported the Governor’s proposed budget for the Dept. of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD); in fact, in March, we asked the Ways and Means Co-chairs to increase funding for the Big Look (for public outreach) when that item was decreased in their budget proposal.

However, toward the end of the session, after monitoring the Big Look Task Force, the League came to the conclusion that the Task Force was not planning the education and outreach effort that the League had supported with the Big Look legislation was passed last session.

The League believes that Oregonians must be a part of any revamp of the land use system, must have ownership, and be ready to advocate for any proposed changes when brought to the Legislature. The League also believed that Big Look’s outreach (just beginning in the summer of 2007) would conflict with efforts to pass M49 (the M37 “fix”). The League eventually asked the Legislature and the Governor to suspend the Big Look until the 2009 Legislative session, extending proposed changes to 2011. At the end of the session, the Legislature cut funding for the consultants and the Governor asked the Task Force to suspend its efforts until reconsideration at the February 2008 special session.

With over 7,500 claims statewide and only 180 days to process them, the League supported the passage of **HB 3546** which allows the state and local jurisdictions another 360 days to process without penalty.

Addressing the consequences of Measure 37 was a top priority of the League this session. The League used the Principles developed for the 2005 session and continued to ask for clarity, consistency and certainty when supporting a solution to the issues surrounding M37. Hundreds of Oregonians testified before the Joint Committee on Land Use Fairness, including the League. Some wanted no change to M37. Others wanted transfer of all development rights or the creation of a broader eligibility class. Many were concerned about loss of high value farm and forest land, protection of Oregon's special places and increased development in water limited areas. Many were concerned about the uncertainty created by M37 claims.

The League testified in support of **HB 3540** which allows some home sites for long time property owners who could have built on their property when they purchased it while denying large subdivisions, commercial and industrial claims. Although the League had hoped the Legislature would enact these modifications itself, Ballot Measure 49 was referred to and passed by the voters in November of 2007.

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2009

**HB 3225** corrects minor errors to Measure 49 (2007) and extends deadlines for some claimants while still requiring the prescribed process for determining these additional claims. It also requires these new claimants to pay a \$175 processing fee.

The Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) is also required to process the 4,600 claims already filed by June 30, 2010. About 950 final orders have been issued to date. The additional 400 new claims will need to be processed by December 31, 2010.

2010

The League provided testimony in Marion County to request denial of expansion of aggregate mining on Exclusive Farm Use property and continues to work to assure our high value farmland is protected from aggregate mining.

The League monitored **SB 1036** that reestablishes guest ranches on land zoned exclusive farm use in Eastern Oregon. Members attended a work group during the interim and monitored the passage of **SB 1031** that makes some minor changes to the Destination Resort statutes. Included are ways to better connect the impact of these resorts with surrounding counties and cities. A work group will continue during the interim to address more complicated issues.

**HB 3647** will require that anyone who wants to provide a soil assessment at a local land use hearing must go through the Department of Land Conservation and Development so that a qualified expert can provide this important data. Anecdotal information is still allowed by individual citizens.

Of great concern is the passage of **SB 1055** that allows wineries in exclusive farm use (EFU) zones to include sale of incidental items and allows events (such as weddings and concerts) on their property. Formerly, these activities required a conditional use permit from the local county. Because the bill has a sunset of 3 years, a workgroup will be meeting in the interim to consider a more comprehensive review of uses in EFU zones.

2010

The League monitored development and passage of **SB 1049** that allows claimants to file a Measure 49 claim if they filed with a county and not the state, due to instructions by county planners. The bill also clarified decisions on properties purchased after the statewide goals were adopted and before a county's comprehensive plan was acknowledged.

2011

**HB 2181, 2182, 2610** and **SB 186** were opposed by the League as limiting citizen involvement by increasing attorney fees, reducing access to the Land Use Board of Appeals and requiring persons who appeal to live nearby or have a personal financial impact in order to participate. We worked to assure that bills relating to changing land use processes such as **HB 2129** improved the system.

With “jobs” being the issue of the session, the League watched closely land use bills related to Industrial Lands. We assured that **SB 766** allowed clear citizen involvement opportunities and had local government input. We opposed **HB 2352, SB 771** and other bills that would have significantly changed processes for replacing or designating new industrial lands. We pointed out that industrial lands are often converted to other uses by local governments and that many such lands were extremely significant for our state’s economy.

The League opposed **HB 3408** which now allows irrigation reservoirs outright on exclusive farm use lands.

The League opposed **HB 3601** that establishes that Department of State Lands (DSL) and Department of Geology and Mineral Industries (DOGAMI) can enter into memorandum of agreement in certain cases involving surface mining so that sole responsibility for permitting is assigned to DOGAMI. The bill requires DSL to be consulted prior to any permitting under established memorandum of agreement regarding any conditions necessary to protect the waters of state. We are concerned about the relationship between the aggregate industry and DOGAMI. However, the bill passed with the assurance by DSL that their policies will continue to be enforced.

We supported **HB 3464** that would have protected Willamette Valley’s high value farmland. It did not pass.

The League opposed **HB 3615** that would have allowed Jackson, Josephine and Douglas Counties to establish new definitions for agriculture and forest lands. Although this bill did not pass, we expect DLCD to work with at least one county under **HB 2229** (2009) to “correct mapping errors” for these lands, but changing definitions was a major concern.

The League opposed one version of **HB 3465**, allowing Silvie’s Ranch to substantially expand the concept of guest ranch and creating a number of other pilot projects. The final bill gives more say in the master plan by the local county and limits it to just the Silvie’s Ranch property. We are concerned about these bills that target one project. The state legislature should focus on policy and not individual projects.

**SB 960** passed, allowing counties to authorize single agri-tourism or other commercial event or activity on tracts of land zoned for exclusive farm use (EFU) and stipulating conditions for authorization. The League followed the development of this legislation during the interim and monitored the various versions until passage. We are hopeful that counties can use this legislation to both support agri-tourism and protect neighbors from adverse impacts. We were more concerned by **HB 3280** related to events at wineries. We asked that the bill be set aside for an interim work group, but the bill passed after a number of amendments. Many of the amendments did address League concerns.

2012

**HB 4032** and **4049** were referred to Ways and Means where they died in committee. Both bills were opposed by the League since they would have limited citizen access to the Land Use Board of Appeals by requiring ownership of property within a certain distance or be adversely affected by the proposed development.

The League supports renewable energy and followed rulemaking by the Dept. of Land Conservation and Development to allow solar projects on farmland. We were pleased that **HB 4078** did not pass that would have expanded the amount of acreage allowed and would have eliminated protections for wildlife.

There were a number of bills that would have weakened or changed our state land use laws for specific areas of the state.

However, money was budgeted to the Dept. of Land Conservation and Development to do rulemaking and monies were budgeted to Jackson, Josephine and Douglas Counties to prepare a petition to consider regional definitions of agricultural and forest lands. **HB 4095**, a bill that would have set new criteria for defining these lands was defeated.

2013

The League continued to oppose legislative efforts to pass “one-off” exceptions to the land use process. An example of this practice was seen when Young Life sought a 4,000-acre expansion of its camp in central Oregon, thereby bypassing the exceptions process at the local level. We argued that specific projects such as this, which do not benefit the public as a whole, should be dealt with through locally approved processes and not through legislative action. The bill was amended to instruct rulemaking to allow youth camps on certain agriculture lands in Eastern Oregon.

The League was silent on the amended bill which passed. We opposed **HB 3121** that would have allowed certain trucking facilities on exclusive farm use land. It died in committee. As did **HB 3439** that would have allowed a manufacturing plant on farmland. We opposed **SB 845** that would have allowed the super-siting of some of our best farmland in Washington County. It died in Committee. We opposed **SB 502** that would have prohibited LCDC from adopting rules related to parks. Since parks are one of many important land uses, they need to be considered in the broader context of all land use needs and not allowed outright anywhere. The bill did not make it out of committee.

**HB 3536** appeared at the end of session that would have allowed the transfer of development opportunities (TDOs) authorized in 2009 to be used in an area near the Metolius Area of Critical State Concern called Aspen Lakes. Another “one-off”, the League opposed and continues to work in the interim against this project as a work group was established.

We opposed **HB 3267** that would have allowed even more industrial land in Malheur County. We believe in a local process to justify such a need. “Industrial lands” was a mantra during session, but little actual proof of need was provided. The bill passed the House, but stalled in the Senate. We opposed **SB 250**, yet another industrial lands bill. The bill would have allowed 50 acres in some places and 150 in others to be added to UGBs for industrial use with little local processes. It did not make it out of committee. **HB 2657** was offered to address conversion of industrial lands to other uses. It passed the House, but was In the Senate on adjournment.

**HB 2898** as a base bill allows disabled citizens to go on to trade school or community college with their special high school diploma. Then an unrelated amendment allowed a specific training facility to be sited on farmland in Columbia County. We opposed that provision, but it did pass. There was a request for a Governor’s veto. Although that did not happen, the Governor did voice frustration about “one-off” land use legislation.

The conflict between farming and non-farming activities on EFU land continued this session. The League sided with the Oregon Farm Bureau on a bill to require an alternatives analysis before permitting an aggregate mine on Class I and II soils in the Willamette Valley. Unfortunately, **HB 2202** in its final form was weakened considerably and instead allowed deeper mining than current limits, ostensibly to disturb less farmland. This did little to alleviate the problem, because existing mines were exempted. The League also supported **HB 2201** to protect this high value farmland. It did not pass.

Before session, the League worked with others on new processes for providing populations forecasts to cities. **HB 2253** passed and rulemaking has begun at both Portland State University's Population Research Center and the Dept. of Land Conservation and Development. The League also worked with others on an alternative process for cities to consider in expanding their Urban Growth Boundaries. **HB 2254** was amended and passed. The League is participating in the rulemaking for this effort.

**HB 2255** was also filed, which would have allowed additional industrial lands to be added outside the usual UGB process and without full community involvement. The League opposed. This bill did not pass.

**HB 3040**, a bill that would form a work group related to the multiple alternate uses currently allowed on farmland. The issue under **HB 2173** relating to wetlands on farmland died, but was considered to be added to any farmland work group. **HB 3040** died in Ways and Means, but the Dept. of Land Conservation and Development will consider whether they have staff to deal with this issue during the interim. The League continues to be concerned about expanding uses on farmland and will follow this effort. The League did support the Department's budget (**SB 5530**) that increased monies for the rulemaking the legislature approved.

Again, the appeals process was under fire. **SB 77** was amended to focus on the League's testimony in support of collecting more data on appeals filed at the Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA).

The League testified both in support of more staff for LUBA (**SB 5531**) and on this amended bill so that future legislatures can better understand who files and the disposition of those lawsuits. There were bills such as **HB 3087** that would limit the amount of appeals fees at the local level. Those bills did not move forward.

**HB 3362** was filed at the request of the City of Bend to require that participants at legislative hearings must raise all issues they may choose to appeal as is currently required in quasi judicial hearings. The League objected because it would require many more notices for each change that might be considered by local governments during the legislative process and would restrain others who might not have been aware of earlier hearings on these broader policy issues. A budget note was considered but rejected by Ways and Means. However, LCDC may find time to convene a discussion of this issue.

The League provided testimony on the Land Conservation and Development's Policy Agenda for 2013-15. We continue to express concern about the Southern Oregon

Regional Pilot Project funded in 2011. The project was extended and funding included in the DLCD budget for 2013. We will continue to monitor and will participate should a rulemaking request to change the definitions of farm and forest lands come from the 3 counties. Yet again, the Legislature considered setting up a Regional Land Use System (**SB 538**), but it only got a public hearing. We supported the agency's consideration of a 10-year plan and the links to human health as well as jobs and the environment.

**SB 246** authorizes Business Oregon to work with public entities to develop certified regionally significant industrial sites through a grant or loan program. The League opposed this bill.

**SB 253** creates a statewide program to inventory industrial sites and assess for their readiness to develop. Again, monies were not appropriated for this program. The League opposed this bill.

2014

**SB 1554** would have required property tax reimbursement should properties be placed in conservation easements or purchased and removed from the tax rolls. After a public hearing, there was discussion that a task force would be convened to discuss this issue. The League had grave concerns about loss of the ability to save important natural areas via easements or purchase.

As usual, there were one-off bills aimed at addressing a single land use issue where the property owner could not gain local support.

The League usually opposes these bills, believing in local implementation of our land use laws under our statewide Goals. Such was the case in **SB 1575** where a raw logging operation wanted to expand on forestland—bringing in logs from elsewhere, making it an industrial use.

**SB 1578** and **HB 4153** would have expedited industrial lands expansion in “low-employment” areas. These were designated “Major Threat” by our OCN partners and they died in committee. Although **SB 1578** was amended to address biomass, it died in Senate Rules at the end of session. We also opposed **HB 4092**, which would have super-sited industrial lands in Malheur County.

The League opposed **HB 4078**, as filed, which would have adopted an urban growth boundary for Metro despite pending court appeals. After the State Court of Appeals handed down their decision, the parties to the lawsuit came together and agreed on a settlement that was then memorialized in the final amended bill. The League was silent on the final bill after assurances among the parties that this bill was simply an extension of an out-of-court settlement.

The League testified on the proposed Policy Agenda of the Land Conservation and Development Commission and provided comments as the Dept. of Land Conservation and Development adopted a Strategic Plan for 2014-2022.

The League is participating in rulemaking for **HB 2253** (2013), population forecasting, and **HB 2254** (2013), UGB Streamlining with rules adoption not expected for **HB 2254** until December of 2015.

2015

The League helped stop **SB 25**, **SB 716** and **SB 748** that would have weakened our statewide land use planning program. We supported **HB 2633** that would have required rulemaking on Goal 7 to address natural hazards such as landslides, earthquakes, tsunamis, flooding and wildfires. The bill did not pass. We also testified on **HB 3447** and **3412** to address this issue. It also did not pass. We supported **SB 94**, another bill that would have required the Dept. of Land Conservation and Development do rulemaking on natural hazards. The bill passed out of committee with additional provisions and was sent to Ways and Means where it died.

We supported **HB 2564**, which would have removed the ban on inclusionary zoning and allowed local governments to consider adding a requirement that a percentage of units in a development are affordable to households below a certain income level. This bill also did not pass. We expect both bills to return in 2016.

**HB 2666**, which would have made it easier to site a mine on farm or forest land (with an emphasis on aggregate mining), remained in committee at the end of session, while **HB 3089**, requiring the Department of Geology and Mineral Industries to compile and post studies on their website, did pass. The League opposed both bills.

The League also opposed similar bills: **HB 3563**, **3090**, **3096** and **3269**.

The League supported **SB 359** that would have limited the fees charged by local governments for land use appeals to \$1,000. The bill died in Committee.

We supported **HB 5027**, the Dept. of Land Conservation and Development budget, to continue the Metropolitan Planning Organization work to reduce greenhouse gas reductions, natural hazards planning and increase grants to local governments for planning, including citizen involvement. This budget was only funded at a status quo level. (See also [Climate Change](#).)

We commented on **SB 5512**, the budget of the Dept. of Geology and Mineral Industries, to increase their work on natural hazards data. We also supported the Land Use Board of Appeals budget (HB 5028) to include a full-time staff attorney to work with the public to help with the appeals process.

We supported **HB 3474** to allow for a Trust Lands Transfer of the Elliott State Forest. It did not pass, but we continue to work with others to find a mechanism to keep the Elliott in public hands.

The League continues to participate in the development of new rules to “streamline” the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) process, while also requiring cities to look more strongly at increasing use of their current UGB land. We commented on, and influenced, the adoption of the Land Conservation and Development’s new Policy Agenda and on their Strategic Plan.

The Land Conservation and Development Commission adopted rules to implement **HB 2254** (2013) in December of 2015. The League participated in their development.

The League followed **HB 2938** related to annexation and opposed it as amended to include a local preemption provision that would override local city charters requiring voter approved annexations. The bill died in committee.

The League opposed **SB 86** which would have allowed firearms facilities outright on farm or forest lands. It died.

We provided oral testimony against **HB 2039** that would have created a Task Force on the Columbia River Gorge since we felt the Commission itself was capable of addressing the issues needing consideration to protect the Gorge. We were pleased that the conversation noted the very real need for more funding for the Gorge Commission, but we were pleased that **HB 2039** died in committee.

2016

The League opposed **HB 4079** that requires the Land Conservation and Development Commission to adopt rules to allow two 50-acre pilot Urban Growth Boundary expansions by July 1, 2017. The League provided modifications to require that any city applying for the pilots would first need to adopt measures to increase affordable housing options within its current boundary. The bill passed with amendments recognizing the League’s concerns and rulemaking will commence. The League will monitor this work.

The League testified in favor of the original **SB 1533** and amended **SB 1533A** (and Section 7 of **HB 4001** as introduced), bills to lift the ban on inclusionary zoning. The bill had substantial amendments, so the League stayed silent on the final bill.

The League opposed **SB 1575** that would have provided substantial developer perks in return for lifting the IZ ban. We hope to support a bill in 2017 that will expand the possible use of inclusionary zoning to more jurisdictions.

As a follow up to our work on **HB 2254** (2013), LWVOR supported the Lane County League's testimony on **HB 4126** to assure that cities already in a UGB expansion process could continue under former rules. The bill passed.

A League member will participate in rules to assure Periodic Review requirements are met under the new streamlined Urban Growth Boundary process.

The League opposed **SB 1548**, a bill that would overturn Goal 14 requirements for urban growth boundary expansions. The bill died. We also opposed **SB 1588**, which would allow certain rural counties to "opt out" of our land use planning program. This bill also died, but is a recurring challenge to the land use program.

The Marion Polk League, in conjunction w/LWVOR, supported **HB 4078**, a bill to create a new transit grant fund. The bill only had one courtesy hearing, but transit groups from around the state supported. We expect to see this bill again, perhaps as part of a major Transportation bill.

The League has followed the Southern Oregon Regional Pilot Project (SORPP) where Jackson, Josephine and Douglas Counties were to research whether or not their exclusive farm and forest lands were "miss-zoned". At least 2 counties had to agree on a proposal. A result of the work is that there is no proposal to LCDC. However, Jackson County has done extensive work and may apply to rezone some properties after considering carrying capacity.

The League continues to follow the restructuring of the Dept. of Geology and Mineral Industries and the budget note regarding their business practices. The League supports the work of the agency related to hazards and their regulation of the mining industry.

2017

The League opposed **HB 2894**, a bill that would have permitted cities to modify their analysis of proposed Urban Growth Boundary expansion lands. The League also

opposed **HB 2893**, a bill that would have required urban growth boundary evaluations related to soils classes. The bills died in committee.

The League opposed **SB 186**, a bill that would have added lands to the Metro Urban Reserve process outside of the broad Metro-area decisions. The bill died in committee. The League originally opposed **SB 644**, related to mining in Eastern Oregon. We worked with sponsors to develop a process to assure environmental protections were considered, including a streamlined permitting process among agencies since the League is following that process for a proposed Calico Gold Mine outside of Vale. The amended bill passed and we will monitor it to assure both agricultural lands and environmental protections continue should any mining projects be proposed. The League provided oral testimony in opposition to **HB 2106** that would have expanded DOGAMI's Board and expanded mining in Eastern Oregon with few restrictions. The bill died in committee.

The League opposed **HB 2222**, yet another bill that would have moved us toward regional land use planning. The bill died in committee. We worked with others in opposition to **HB 2893**, a bill that would have changed the analysis of soils for urban growth boundary expansions. It died in House Rules.

The League opposed **HB 2937, 2938, 2456** and **SB 1024**, all around the concept of allowing accessory dwelling units on rural residential lands. We spent much of the session educating proponents of the differences in infrastructure availability around water and sewer and impact on rural roads, many of which are farm to market roads for our agricultural industry. The bills died in various committees with a promise that more work would be done during the interim. However, **HB 3012** passed after modifications mentioned above related to water and sewer. The bill allows an older house (built between 1850 and 1945) to be converted into an accessory dwelling unit and a second home be built on rural residential lands.

The League followed **HB 2007** that was folded into **SB 1051**. We worked to improve the final bill to allow local governments more time to implement the requirements of the bill, including a requirement that cities and properties within Urban Growth Boundaries allow accessory dwelling units on all residential properties.

The League supported partial funding of staffing requested in **HB 3373**, a bill that would have provided DLCD and the Dept. of Housing and Community Services each with a staffer to work on statewide housing issues. These staffers were not funded in the agencies' final budgets.

The League provided testimony on **SB 1017** that would have required the State Forester to establish guidelines for wildfire buffer zones that produce defensible spaces around lands in forestland-urban interface. Because it also included a tax credit, the League encouraged local governments to increase buffers instead.

The League provided oral testimony in opposition to **SB 432, SB 602, 608, 612 and 618**, all of which would weaken our statewide land use system. **SB 432** was amended and passed out of committee to Ways and Means but died. The League continues to work with legislators to find ways to increase economic development in the 8 Eastern Oregon counties while protecting the agricultural industry and not subverting our land use system.

The League opposed **HB 3245**, a bill that would remove a local elected body from approving or opposing a comprehensive map amendment. The bill was amended to address some of the League's concerns and passed.

We opposed **HB 2222** that would have allowed Deschutes County to update their zoning without using Regional Problem-Solving or the process set up in **HB 2229** (2009).

**HB 2017**, the omnibus transportation bill, passed. It included elements which the League supported, including additional monies for statewide public transit. This is good for both the land use program and climate change.

The League provided testimony to the Land Conservation and Development Commission on its proposed 2017-19 Policy Agenda.

2018

**HB 4006** passed with \$1,730,000 in funding for DLCDC to assist cities in holding public meetings in cities with high numbers of "rent burdened" residents. The League supported the amended bill WITH the funding. They also received \$300,000 to provide planning assistance to Eastern Oregon counties.

The League supported **HB 4034** which died, followed by **HB 4031A**, a bill that clarified/corrected a few bills from the 2017 session, including **SB 1051** (2017) so that accessory dwelling units (ADUs) are only required in cities and inside urban growth boundaries and not throughout counties. The League agreed to work on legislation for 2019 related to ADUs in rural residential zones. We opposed **HB 4092** which would have established new standards for the expansion of a state airport on land zoned for

exclusive farm use. The focus is the Aurora Airport surrounded by Exclusive Farm Use lands south of Wilsonville. The bill died but later in 2018 a grant proposal came before the Emergency Board. It too was rejected but legislators asked that a process be established to bring all parties together to resolve this perennial issue. **HB 4060** was filed to address transportation issues; a **-7 amendment** was introduced to address aggregate mining permitting. The League joined with partners in opposition. The amendment was not considered.

The State Court of Appeals held the Part Five amendments to the Territorial Sea Plan were invalid on procedural grounds. The League encouraged the Land Conservation and Development Commission to take action to address the procedures and again adopt the Plan as previously proposed. (See also **Offshore and Coastal Management**.) The Dept. of Land Conservation and Development received federal monies to update the 2010 Climate Change Adaptation Framework. (See also **Land Use**). The League will engage in this update.

The League worked on legislation that may be considered for 2019 related to allowing counties to approve accessory dwelling units in rural residential zones with state sideboards.

The League continues to follow the permitting process for a proposed gold mine (Calico/Grassy Mountain outside of Vale) because it is the first time that multiple agencies who need to provide permits are processing them concurrently.

2019

(See also the **Housing** section.) The League did provide multiple testimonies on **HB 2001**, providing for “middle housing”, and **HB 2003**, dealing with regional planning and increased housing needs analyses, which significantly improved those bills. We will be participating in rulemaking to assure a fair and equitable implementation of these significant new policy bills. We supported **HB 2075** that would have provided monies for a new Development Readiness Program for DLCD. It did not pass, but money was allocated to the two housing bills. We provided comments on **HB 2228** that would have allocated monies to the Assn. of Oregon Counties and League of Oregon Cities to also provide technical assistance for these housing bills. It did not pass.

**SB 8**, which we opposed, did pass that provides for legal fees on Land Use Board of Appeals of public supported housing if the case is deemed frivolous and the local government supports the project. We provided testimony with concerns on **SB 10**, a bill that would have established very high-density requirements adjacent to transportation corridors. The concept of increasing density near where the public has

supported transit is a good one, but this bill's requirements needed modification. The bill did not pass. We worked on **SB 88**, the rural accessory dwelling unit bill, and were neutral during session. It did not pass, but agencies are to consider wildfire danger, including building code changes and mapping of high-risk areas in forested areas. We opposed **HB 2456**, a bill that would have allowed 2-acre lots on agricultural lands outside of Ontario. It died in the Senate. The League opposed **HB 2363**, a bill that would have amended **HB 3012** (2017) to expand dwelling approvals without a true nexus between preserving historic homes and our land use system. We also opposed **HB 2357**, a bill that would have limited "standing" in appeals to those who live within 25 miles of the project. Neither bill passed.

The League continues to participate in Land Conservation and Development Commission meetings and recently provided testimony on their 2019-21 policy agenda.

The Dept. of Land Conservation and Development received federal monies to update the 2010 Climate Change Adaptation Framework. (See also [Land Use](#)). The Framework includes input from over 23 state agencies who have been creating or updating Climate Adaptation Plans: These plans are to include mitigation, sequestration and adaptation objectives. The new "risks" added from previous versions include Air Quality & Water Quality and recommendations include: Establish a leadership and governance structure with every agency providing at least one Climate Change budget item for 2021 and beyond. (See also [Climate Section](#)).

2020

SB 1536 focused the need for resources and policies on wildfire as recommended by the Governor's Wildfire Council. The League provided [comments](#) on the legislation which passed a policy committee and Ways and Means Subcommittees but died at the end of session. Considering the Sept. 2020 wildfires, this was perhaps one of the legislature's biggest errors.

The League was actively engaged in rulemaking from the 2019 HB 2001 and HB 2003 related to housing with three members serving on rulemaking committees.

HB 4084 would have established a fund to help pay for systems development charges in rural areas for multi-family affordable housing. The League provided [testimony](#) in support. The bill passed the policy committee but died in Ways and Means.

HB 4095 would have allowed urban growth boundaries to expand around the state. The League [opposed](#). The bill passed the House and a Senate policy committee, but died before a final Senate vote.

The League provided comments and supported rules on the Oregon Housing Needs Analysis to the Land Conservation and Development Commission.

The League provided [support with comments](#) to the Land Conservation and Development

Commission on Temporary Rules for Shelter/Housing due to Wildfires.

HB 4012 was a bill that originally related to a transfer of development rights and was amended to consider Bend area Common School Fund lands be sold as part of Bend's Urban Growth Boundary. The League was asked to join a Work Group trying to address this unusual piece of legislation. As a part of the compromise, 12.5 acres are required to be set aside for affordable and low-income housing. The amended bill passed the House and a Senate Committee but died at the end of session.

A League member has been following the deliberations of the Board of Forestry and the interim Senate Wildfire Reduction Committee.

The League provided critical comments to the Dept. of Forestry on their proposed Forest Management Plan. The League also provided testimony on their Climate Report Plan.

2021

SB 391, a bill that authorizes county to allow owner of lot or parcel within rural residential zone to construct one accessory dwelling unit on lot or parcel, subject to certain restrictions, passed. The League has spent a number of years working on this legislation. We actively opposed SB 16, a bill that will allow up to 100 homes on 200 acres in the Eastern Oregon Border area in Malheur County. **We sent a floor letter to the House requesting a NO vote.** However, the bill passed. **The League requested that Governor Brown veto the bill, but she signed the bill in August and allowed it to move forward.**

HB 2488 would add a separate Climate Goal to our 19 Land Use Planning Goals. The League [supported with amendments](#). The bill passed the policy committee but died in Ways and Means.

The League provided [testimony](#) to the Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) in support of the new Oregon Housing Needs Analysis, but also focused on the need to provide infrastructure monies and staffing for local governments to help them prepare current lands inside their cities and Urban Growth Boundaries (UGBs) for development.

2022

The League provided [testimony](#) to the Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) in support of the new Oregon Housing Needs Analysis, but also focused on the need to provide infrastructure monies and staffing for local governments to help them prepare current lands inside their cities and Urban Growth Boundaries (UGBs) for development.

## Citizen Participation

(See also Governance: [Citizen Participation and Access](#))

1999

One of the major losses of the session was the death of HB 2805 in the Senate Judiciary Committee after passing easily in the House. This "Anti-SLAPP" (Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation) bill would have provided some immunity from lawsuits for citizens giving public testimony. The League played a high-profile role in this battle to protect citizen participation. A number of bills were introduced that were designed to overturn local governments' constitutional home rule rights. One was a bill to overturn Eugene's Toxic-Right-to-Know Ordinance. [See [Hazardous Materials](#).] An attempt to prohibit communities from choosing to vote on annexation measures (**HB 3389**) failed. Also failed was a bill barring local government from prohibiting smoking in bars (**HB 2806**); as well as another (**HB 3005**) prohibiting local government from regulating density. **HB 2658**, which prohibits local governments from adopting inclusionary housing policies, was passed and signed by the governor.

2001

Finally, an "Anti-SLAPP" (Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation) bill—**HB 2460B** passed, protecting citizens against frivolous lawsuits designed to discourage public participation. It was signed into law by Governor Kitzhaber on June 26, 2001 and is now ORS 30.142. The League was a leader in the coalition working to pass this bill.

2007

The League has continued to follow the actions of the Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) and advocated for passage of their Citizen Involvement Guidelines that govern LCDC's actions. The League also testified in favor of rules governing processing of M37 claims and requiring notice when claims are used for land use applications at the local level. (see Energy related **HB 2820** and **2704** Solar siting)

2019

SB 8, which we opposed, did pass. It provides for legal fees on Land Use Board of Appeals of public supported housing if the case is deemed frivolous and the local government supports the project.

2021 (Rev. 2021, Peggy Lynch)

The League continued to follow the potential disposition of the Elliott State Forest. We provided testimony to the State Land Board in December of 2020 as they directed staff to work with Oregon State University on potential purchase of the forest from the Common School Fund.

League members were engaged in rulemaking for **HB 2001** and **HB 2003** (2019) and provided testimony throughout the rulemaking process that addresses the need for "middle housing" in all single family zones and creates a timeline and process fo local jurisdictions to do Housing Needs Analyses and adopt Housing Production Strategies to address the need for units for a variety of demographics and economic situations. A Budget Note was added to **HB 5006** so that the Dept. of Land Conservation and Development and the Oregon Housing and Community Services agencies would provide a report to the 2022 legislature on how a Regional Housing Needs Analysis might be incorporated in Oregon's planning system.

The League provided testimony in opposition to **HB 2655**, a bill that would prohibit counties from allowing more than one-acre rural residential lands and in opposition

to **HB 2778**, a bill that would allow homes built in 1974 and before as “historic”. Both bills died.

**SB 391**, a bill that allows accessory dwelling units in rural residential zones with certain sideboards, passed. The League has spent a number of years working on this legislation. We actively opposed **SB 16**, a bill that will allow up to 100 homes on 200 acres in the Eastern Oregon Border area in Malheur County. However, the bill passed.

**HB 3040** requires a study of Systems Development Charges (SDCs). The League provided comments to committee members and the amended bill includes sideboards so that there is an understanding of the purpose of SDCs that may lead to a future conversation around who should pay for the infrastructure that communities need.

**HB 3318** passed to allow a section of land near Bend, known as the Stevens Road tract, to be added to Bend’s Urban Growth Boundary along with requirements for affordable housing, transportation and public involvement.

The League supported **SB 5531 and HB 2110**, the budget bill for the Land Use Board of Appeals and a bill that adjusts fees for the agency. Both passed.

The League supported **SB 5530**, the budget bill for the Land Conservation and Development Commission. The Dept. received the largest budget increase in many years, for which the League is grateful since this agency is about where we all live, work, shop and play and how we get there. They are to support local jurisdictions as they do land use planning. The League also supports the rulemaking around Climate Friendly and Equitable Communities that is on-going.

The League is following the rulemaking on Climate Friendly and Equitable Communities. We are also following the implementation of **HB 2001 and 2003** (2019) around middle housing, Housing Needs Analyses and Housing Production Strategies. We are also following the work of DLCD and OHCS on a Regional Housing Needs Analysis as the data from the original work exposed not only the number of units needed but the demographics and economic targets.

**2022:** The League supported **HB 4064**, a bill that changes the rules around manufactured housing to allow them in all single family zones and expands the eligibility for siting manufactured home parks.

The League opposed **HB 4118**, a bill that would allow up to 100 acres outside an Urban Growth Boundary for “workforce housing”. The bill did not pass. We also engaged in

**SB 1537**, a bill that would have required state agencies to do an extensive analysis on the cost of any rulemaking on housing. The bill did not pass.

The League participated in a webinar on Oregon's land use planning program. We continue to be a member of the Oregon Housing Alliance.

2023 (Rev. Oct. 2023, Peggy Lynch)

The League engaged in both land use and housing bills this session. The League provided [testimony](#) on [SB 534](#) in support of a pilot \$3 million fund to provide financing for the development of infrastructure and other costs, usable only for housing to remain affordable to moderate income households for at least 30 years. SB 534 was incorporated into [HB 2001](#), Section 51, and was passed and signed by the Governor on March 29. With the increase in staff of seven permanent positions at DLCD, they have created a new [Housing Division](#).

The League provided [testimony](#) on [HB 5027](#), the DLCD budget, and were disappointed that only the housing Policy Option Packages were approved. Missing were positions for wildfire and climate planning. However, the agency received a number of positions related to housing and one surprise bill related to green infrastructure and another on solar siting.

[HB 2889](#): Establishes Oregon Housing Needs Analysis within Housing and Community Services Department. The League provided [testimony](#) in support.

The League provided [testimony](#) on [HB 2983](#) in support of manufactured dwellings and dwellings parks. Although HB 2983 did not pass, there is money in the Oregon Housing and Community Services budget or other housing bills that should help with this housing issue.

[SB 70](#) amends the definition of high-value farmlands for residential rezoning of lands within the Eastern Oregon Border Economic Development Region from [SB 16](#) (2021). LWVOR provided [testimony](#) in opposition, continuing to focus on water quality and quantity; however, the bill passed and has been signed by the Governor.

[SB 1013](#), a bill that would allow a recreational vehicle to be sited on a rural property, was amended by the [-4 amendment](#) and was signed by the Governor with an effective date of Jan. 1, 2024. The League worked behind the scenes to be sure that water and sewer would be safely provided since the RV would likely be sharing the main residence' facilities.

The League provided [testimony](#) in opposition to [HB 3442](#), a bill that would have required local governments to allow development of affordable housing on certain lands within a 100-year floodplain or subject to property development constraints under land use regulations related to natural disasters and hazards. The bill was amended to clarify those public safety concerns and passed. The Governor has signed.

The League provided [testimony](#) with concerns on [SB 835](#), a bill that required that a single septic system be used for both the main home and an accessory dwelling unit placed on a lot where a septic system is used. The bill was amended addressing our concerns, was passed and signed by the Governor.

The League was alerted to [SB 1087](#), a bill to allow restaurants, 25-car parking lots, and 5,000-square-foot seating areas for 250-300 people on land designated for exclusive farm use (EFU land). The League is concerned with the precedent that would be set by allowing this activity in Lane County as other counties could ask for the same use on their EFU lands in the future. The League did not provide testimony, but would have provided opposition testimony had the bill received a Work Session. The bill died in the Senate Rules Committee but could well return in 2024 or 2025.

[SB 4](#), known as the CHIPS Act, includes \$200 million in grants and loans with a commitment to provide a certain number of permanent full-time jobs to help semiconductor industries and would allow the Governor to “supersite” lands for this industry many acres of farmland “just in case” the semiconductor industry might want to build a new facility in Oregon. We provided [testimony](#) in opposition only to Section 10 of the bill. The bill passed and was signed by the Governor, but many sideboards were placed around the “supersiting” provision.

The League provided [testimony](#) in opposition to [SB 1051](#) with the [-2 amendment](#), a bill that would allow a property owner to request an Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) expansion of up to 200 acres outside of the current UGB process, but inside an urban reserve. The bill died in committee, but elements of the bill appeared in [HB 3414](#) (see below) as did [SB 1096](#), [HB 3620](#) and [HB 3616](#).

[HB 3414](#) would have created a new Housing Accountability and Production Office in DLCD and also included a section that says that local governments may not deny a variance under certain circumstances. Variances are used to address exceptions to a code’s “clear and objective standards”. Toward the end of session, the Governor included a section in the bill that would have allowed private property owners to ask a city to add their lands (lands adjacent to current UGBs) for development without demonstrated need. The League provided verbal testimony based on our Nov. 2022 LCDC [testimony](#), pointing out that it’s not more raw land we need; it’s funding for

infrastructure and planning staff. Although it passed the House, it did not pass the Senate—by one vote. The League continues to engage the Governor and others to remove the UGB expansion of any bill considered in 2024. The Governor has created a Housing Production Advisory Council (HPAC). The League discovered that the Council is focusing on land use and land development code provisions from the view of housing developers.

The League supports a focus on creating buildable lots, including addressing Systems Development Charges and infrastructure costs, but believes that individual cities should be making decisions on planning and permitting. The League has provided testimony to HPAC supporting and opposing HPAC's recommendations. See [League testimony for 2023](#) on our website.

There were a number of bills filed ([HB 3180](#), [HB 3181](#), [HB 3179](#) and [HB 2989](#)) related to siting solar in Oregon. The League engaged in meetings of the Oregon Siting Table, but did not provide testimony on any of these bills.

The League provided [support](#) for the Land Use Board of Appeals budget ([HB 5028](#)).

The League continues to engage in the Elliott State Research Forest (ESRF), including attending their prospective Board meetings. Work is continuing on eventual adoption of a Habitat Conservation Plan and a Forest Management Plan for the forest. Of concern to the League is how their plan can be financially viable without excessive timber harvest.

[SB 161](#) passed to change a date that was included in [SB 1546](#) (2022) related to requirements in establishing the ESRF to December of 2023. The Governor signed with the bill's effective date June 30, 2023. [HB 5048](#) with the [-2 amendment](#) funds, starting Jan. 1, 2024, the new Elliott State Forest Research Authority Board staffing and expenses. It is expected that the 2024 session will enhance this new agency's budget and fiscal needs, but the 2023 funding provides for an Executive Director and two other positions.

The League is also following the OSU Board of Trustees as they need to accept a role in management of the ESRF by December. State Land Board will meet Dec. 12 to provide a final decision on the ESRF going forward.

The Shutter Creek former Oregon Dept. of Corrections facility was transferred by the federal government to the Dept. of State Lands in anticipation of the property being the home of the ESRF staff and research team. There is also discussion around a tribal role for the property. The property currently pays a significant fee for sewer to the City of Lakeside. Conversations with the city are on-going since that infrastructure is

critical to keeping effluent out of Tenmile Lake where a significant number of failing septic systems also exist.

2024 (Rev. June 2024, Peggy Lynch)

On November 14, Oregon State University President Murthy informed the State Land Board (SLB) that it is no longer in a position to participate in the management of the Elliott State Research Forest (ESRF). The Dept. of State Lands will continue to be responsible for the ESRF, but the Authority that was created by SB 1546 no longer applies. However, the SLB will follow the principles of SB 1546 as they support a Habitat Conservation Plan and Forest Management Plan for the ESRF. The League continues to follow the Elliott since LWVOR supported a public ownership since well before 2016.

The League engaged with partners and the Governor's Housing staff as the Governor worked to develop a bill for the 2024 session, building on and amending HB 3414 (2023) that did not pass. We also continued to engage with the Governor's Housing Production Advisory Council—providing testimony in support, opposition or comments on their housing proposals.

2024 The Governor filed ONE bill in 2024: SB 1537. The League continued to engage in a Work Group on the bill throughout the session and, although we did not formally support the final bill because it continued to contain a provision on expansion of urban growth boundaries, much of the bill reflected changes we had requested, including a loan fund to help developers cover costs up front for housing developments. Variances are allowed, but any related to natural resource issues such as wetlands and tree codes were exempted in the bill. A separate bill, SB 1530, included monies for specific infrastructure projects linked to promised housing for middle- and low-income Oregonians. The League also supported HB 4134 that provides monies for certain middle income housing projects. All bills passed and were signed by the Governor.

The Governor's Housing Production Advisory Council presented a 59-item proposal to the Governor for her consideration in 2025. The League is now engaged in a Work Group to consider which items we recommend and which should not be considered in 2025.

The League provided comments on HB 4080-1 in support of staffing at DLCD to provide a robust public engagement process as the federal government considers potential leases off shore for wind energy projects. The bill passed and was signed by the Governor. (See also our Coastal position.)

The League supported a request by the Dept. of State Lands (DSL) to reallocate \$4 million that was assigned to the "to be formed" Elliott State Research Forest Authority to DSL to manage the ESRF. The reallocation was approved.

The League monitored many "one-off" land use bills or bills that had last minute amendments proffered that violate Oregon's land use laws. Luckily, they did not move this session.

On Dec. 5, the Land Conservation and Development Commission adopted the first round of rules related to the Oregon Housing Needs Analysis, setting targets for cities to work toward a range of housing styles, sizes and costs linked to population demographics. The League has participated in and supported this work.

2025 (Rev. Sept. 2025 Peggy Lynch)

The League participated in a Land Use 101 webinar for legislators and staff before the beginning of session, focusing on Goals 3, 4,7,10 and 14.

We engaged in the development of [HB 2138](#), the Governor's middle housing bill. Although we did not provide official testimony, we served on a work group to provide League input in the drafting of the legislation.

The League [supported HB 3013](#) with the [-1 amendment](#), a bill that addressed the effect of land use provisions that fail to gain acknowledgement. The bill was targeted at a specific land use decision related to the Aurora Airport proposed expansion and the role of LUBA in the matter. The League has engaged in the expansion onto farmland in the past and this testimony was a continuation of that work. The bill did not pass.

The League [supported HB 3031-1](#), a bill that establishes a program through which the Oregon Infrastructure Finance Authority may provide financial assistance for infrastructure to support housing development. We were engaged in raising awareness of infrastructure needs for the past few years and were pleased to see this bill pass. However, funding for this bill was moved to [SB 5531](#) and includes authorization for only \$10 million in lottery bond proceeds for deposit into the fund. [HB 5006](#) includes \$1.2 million Lottery Funds for program administration and \$1 dollar in Other Funds expenditure limitation for expenditures from the fund, with a budget note directing the Oregon Business Development Dept. to report to the Ways and Means Committee during the February 2026 legislative session on program implementation and project recommendations.

The League also [supported HB 3939](#), a bill that would have appropriated \$25,850,000 to the Oregon Business Development Department (OBDD) for the expansion of the residential infrastructure grant program to certain cities and until January 2, 2028. Although the bill did not pass (see above for some limited funding), certain projects listed in the amended bill were included in later legislation.

The League provided [testimony](#) in support of [SB 77](#), a bill to clarify the allowable home occupations on lands zoned for forest or farm use. We also provided [testimony](#) in support of [SB 78](#), a bill to establish a maximum size of replacement dwellings on lands zoned for forest or farm use. And we provided [testimony](#) in opposition to [SB 788](#), a bill that would have allowed lands zoned for exclusive farm use to be used for weddings or events east of the summit of the Cascade Range. In all three cases, we relied on our support for the statewide land use planning program, especially Goal 3, protection of agricultural lands to determine our position on the bills. None of the bills passed.

The League added our voice (MOF-OTA) to support increased transit and alternative transportation choices to the transportation package being considered. A bill did not pass during session. An emergency "special" session was called by the Governor and a slimmed down bill, [HB 3991](#), was considered.

The League followed rulemaking related to the use of farm and forest land at DLCD. The intent of LCDC was to address a number of issues around agriculture uses ([Farm and Forest Modernization](#)) and attempt to standardize and/or clarify these issues. They authorized a Farm Stand Rules Advisory Committee ([roster](#)). The draft rules were misunderstood by the general public causing the rulemaking to be paused. This is another instance where social media can spread misinformation and affect public policy decisions.

The Governor vetoed [vetoed SB 1047](#), a bill that would have required Curry County and the Water

Resources Department to expedite review of applications for use on specified lands (a golf course proposal).

# Parks

Adopted January 1999

The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that a parks system is an appropriate function of state government and should provide the following services:

- Acquire, protect and preserve natural, scenic, cultural, historic, and wildlife sites and other resources;
- Provide camping and a variety of other recreational opportunities, consistent with the natural environment;
- Offer interpretive and educational information and programs regarding the history, culture, and natural resources of the state and the features of specific parklands;
- Protect public ownership of beaches;
- Secure affordable and safe access to parks and ocean beaches.

## PROGRAM

The LWVOR believes that to be effective the Oregon parks system must have:

- Competent personnel in sufficient numbers;
- Clear assignment of responsibility;
- Adequate, stable funding;
- Coordination with different agencies and levels of government;
- Well-defined channels for citizen input and review;
- Consideration of local concerns when consistent with statewide public interest;
- Reasonable protection from crime and vandalism;
- Cooperation and coordination with the private sector when in the public interest; and
- Long-range planning.

## FUNDING

The LWVOR supports a balance and varied mixture of revenues for Oregon's parks with the General Fund providing basic support for departmental operations. While the LWVOR believes user fees are sometimes appropriate, the League opposes them for non-intensive, brief visits. The sale of annual use permits is encouraged. Other appropriate revenue sources include but are not limited to recreational vehicle and automobile registration fees, lottery funds, and certain specific charges, such and

bottle taxes. The Oregon parks system should actively seek donations of land, funds, facilities and services.

#### **SERVICE PROVISIONS**

The LWVOR advocates the efficient provision of services in state parks under state supervision and control. In general, the League is opposed to the private management of parks but supports well-supervised contracts for services with a reasonable return for the Oregon parks system. Use of correction-system and volunteer labor is supported if it is well supervised.

#### **PLANNING**

The LWVOR believes that the Oregon parks system requires a long-range strategic plan that includes periodic evaluation and is adequately funded. Such a plan should give high priority to:

- Preservation and maintenance of existing parks;
- Protection and expansion of public access to ocean beaches;
- Acquisition of additional park resources;
- Provision of campground facilities and day-use areas; and
- Protection of scenic waterways.

### **Position Implementation - Parks**

1997

LWVOR Convention adopted a 2-year study of the Oregon parks system.

1998

The passage of Ballot Measure 66 dedicated 15% of lottery funding to parks.

1999

**SB 5530** was passed and signed by the governor, implementing Ballot Measure 66. The League opposed the bill, which allocated a significant portion of the parks- designated lottery funding to "backfill" reduced General Fund allocations. **SB 1081**, which would have restricted the ability of local governments to fund parks with System Development Charges, was vetoed by the governor. A very contentious bill involving the coastal "804" trail was also vetoed by the governor. This would have eased the vacation of public beach accesses.

2001

LWVOR supported the Parks budget, largely for maintenance and repair of existing facilities. Parks did, however, get a slightly better share of dedicated lottery funds. With the help of the south coast Leagues, the State Parks Commission finally denied the request to change the Beach Zone Line, which threatened public ownership of Oregon's beaches.

The first attempt to erode Oregon's famous Beach Law was during the 1999 legislative session. The controversial "804" coastal trail near Yachats was finally resolved through mediation rendering legislative resolution moot.

2003

LWVOR issued its first "Action Alert" of the session in opposition to **HJR 35** which proposed a cap on M-66 funds going to parks and other natural resource programs. The House Joint Resolution died in committee on adjournment.

2005

Late in the session a bill, opposed by the League, transferring the land, staff, mission, budget, and bonded indebtedness of the Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center to State Parks, passed. The legislative rationale was the anticipated increase in M-66 lottery revenue (which expires in 2014) available only to State Parks. The Governor refused to sign the bill, but did not veto it.

2007

This session the League took the lead in advocating for working toward meeting the Oregon Benchmark for Parks of 35 park acres per 1,000 Oregonians. We testified on the Parks budget to continue working on the backlog of park maintenance and increase the land acquisition budget. \$23 million was set aside to purchase land in the next biennium. As a result of those priorities, we also testified against expanding Parks role in such areas as new bicycle velodromes and other raids on Parks dollars.

We also testified against using M66 dollars for a new State Capitol State Park, but the Legislature did support expending more than \$800,000 for maintenance of the Capitol grounds.

League members have also been monitoring the Oregon Parks and Recreation Commission meetings.

The League testified on the Oregon Parks and Recreation budget (**HB 5033**). Last biennium, with the League's advocacy, the state increased funds for park land purchases. In 2009, due to reduced lottery money available and the need to provide immediate jobs for Oregonians, monies to repair parks increased. There is still a

backlog of maintenance at our state parks. Parks was also given permission to raise fees for a variety of camping opportunities. The League continues to be concerned that we not price low income Oregonians out of our state parks. We provided testimony against a number of bills that would have added to Parks' responsibilities. None moved forward this session, in part because lottery dollars are down.

We also testified against the Economic and Community Development Department's (HB 5008) request to move the Main Streets downtown redevelopment program to State Parks. With the downturn in lottery proceeds, we wanted to protect those Measure 66 lottery dollars.

**SB 681**, a proposal to dredge the Willamette River, and **SB 661**, closing Court Street to add to the State Capital State Park, were also considered by the Legislature and opposed by the League. **SB 681** would have allocated \$3 million for a project that might well damage the Willamette River. Neither bill moved this session, but a bill creating a Task Force to work on a long range vision of the State Capitol was approved.

The League continues to monitor meetings of the Oregon Parks and Recreation Commission. We are evaluating Initiative #70 that would replace the current law related to lottery funding for Parks and salmon recovery.

Measure 76, supported by the League, was passed by the voters, continuing lottery money for parks and the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds. The initiative changed some allocations of the money to increase monies to local parks and to decrease monies to natural resource agencies unless that work was focused on the purpose of the Measure.

2013

**SB 7** was passed that creates a public corporation to run the Oregon State Fair and Expo Center. Non-Measure 76 monies were provided to run the Fair and Expo until this new entity takes over.

**SB 331** was introduced to change the share of recreational vehicle license fees from the current 35% to counties to 45% to counties for county parks programs. Every 5% change would mean about \$1.6 million shift from state parks to counties. Although this legislation did not pass, Parks has been instructed to work with the counties to find solutions to county parks funding issues.

The League supported **SB 401** that would have required the Parks Commission to study and consider increasing designation of additional Scenic Rivers. It did not pass, but OPRD was instructed to consider this issue during the interim.

The League provided testimony of concern regarding the proposed “exchange” of the Grouse Mountain Ranch with part of the Bandon State Natural Area Parks property.

Monies for the ranch were to come from a private business (Bandon Biota) to build another golf course. Our points included the need for the state to follow the criteria in OAR 736-019-0070 regarding property exchanges.

We also asked for a series of conditions should such an exchange be approved. Subsequently, the Parks Commission chose not to purchase the Grouse Mountain property, but the Bandon property was authorized to be exchanged for a series of other properties and money to purchase future properties.

The matter is still in limbo because the Bandon property was given to Oregon by the Bureau of Land Management to be used for general recreation use. **HB 5034**, the Parks budget, passed with a budget note requiring the department to comply with ORS 390.855 and study and analyze at least 3 river segments to be added to Oregon’s Scenic Rivers program each biennium.

2014

**SB 1514** passed, which increases the percentage of revenue from recreational vehicle fees to counties from state parks for county park use. The new allocation is 40% for counties and 60% for the state. In 2015, that percentage is to increase for counties to 45%/55%. This change will cost the state about \$1 million in 2013. The various parks providers also agreed to work together to find efficiencies in service provision among the various groups, including possible shared maintenance and even trading of properties to consolidate services.

2015

Bandon Biota has pulled its purchase request for the Bandon State Natural Area. Prior to that, they illegally entered the property to do well testing and will have some liability to “fix” the damage. They had also already provided funds to address gorse issues in the area and that money will not be returned.

2016

The League supported the designation of sections of the Chetco and Molalla Rivers as Scenic Waterways. Both were approved by both the Parks Commission and the Water Resources Commission. Rulemaking is happening to shape nonbinding land management for these river reaches.

2017

The League participated in the development of the next round of Scenic Waterways, working on a broad public process where a section of the Nehalem, the North Santiam

and South Umpqua Rivers were considered. Currently the section of the Nehalem is going forward for consideration by the Governor in 2018.

The League provided oral testimony in support of **HB 2318**, a bill that allows OPRD to adjust fees to manage the use of our parks by changing fees depending on parks usage. The bill is meant to help replace lost revenue due to other legislative action.

2018

The 2018 Emergency Board increased funding for maintenance and for potential property acquisition due to increased lottery funds.

The League continues to follow the potential designation of a section of the Nehalem River as our next Scenic Waterway.

2019

Oregon Governor Kate Brown has designated a 17.5-mile section of the Nehalem River as Oregon's newest state scenic waterway. Work has now started on consideration of a 27-mile portion of the South Umpqua River as our next designated scenic waterway.

Members of our Umpqua League are involved.

**2021** (Rev. 2021, Peggy Lynch)

The League provided testimony in support of elements of their budget bill, **HB 5025** which passed. We also commented on two policy bills that did not pass: **HB 2125** and **SB 29**. Good news is that \$50 million was added to the ending budget bill, **HB 5006**, for improvements in all State Parks. **SB 289** passed that recognizes the need for all people to feel safe in Oregon's public spaces. The League worked behind the scenes on this bill.

**2023** (Rev. Oct. 2023, Peggy Lynch)

The League provided [comments](#) on **SB 5527**, the OPRD budget bill.

2025 (Rev. Sept. 2025 Peggy Lynch)

The League provided [testimony](#) on **HB 5026**, the OPRD budget bill in part to address [comments](#) by the Legislative Fiscal Office outlining concerns for the long-term sustainability of OPRD's operational funding. **The League will engage with these budget issues before the 2027 legislative session.**

## Pesticides/Toxics

State Position *(position adopted May 2023)*

**The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes:**

**The League of Women Voters of Oregon affirms that pesticides and other biocides should be managed as interrelated parts of life-supporting ecosystems, and their use should be controlled in order to preserve the physical, chemical and biological**

**integrity of ecosystems and to protect public health, and that agriculture policies should promote farm practices that are environmentally sound and sustainable.**

#### **LWVOR Supports:**

- **Initial pesticide and biocide testing for registration has proven insufficient for preventing harm. We recommend increased testing by governmental agencies and third parties. We must identify and weigh benefits that balance safety versus toxicity, protecting food security while safeguarding public health and the environment.**
- **Decisions for testing should be based upon a timeframe between 5 to 10 years, or as new scientific data dictates. Varying weather conditions can greatly influence pesticide drift, impacting nearby bodies of water, schools, and communities including agricultural workers. The registrant of the Pesticide or Biocide currently bears the burden of proof for safety however the current regimen of tests is insufficient.**
- **When approving the use of a Pesticide or Biocide we must consider: Risk to humans, animals, the environment, economic harm, cost to business, impact on food security, and the spread of invasive species and disease.**
- **Pesticide labels should be improved to include: Regulations restricting use, hazards of use, best practices of use to minimize harm. Labels should be clearly written and easy to see and understand in multiple languages and use graphics to clarify explanations.**
- **Federal and state agencies bear the responsibility for pesticide policy, based on research by pesticide manufacturers. These government agencies should also contribute to pesticide research with support from other groups.**
  
- **We support using adaptive pesticide management, focusing on continual observation of current regulatory practice outcomes. As scientific advances reveal environmental and health impacts, as well as impacts on food security, the system should include the ability to rapidly react to new risk assessment data.**

2019

The League supported **SB 853** and **HB 3058**, which related to pesticides, including prohibiting chlorpyrifos and requiring licensing for neonicotinoids. They did not pass. The LWVOR has started a study on the use of pesticides and other biocides in Oregon

to better understand essential uses, harms from using pesticides, and potential policy options.

The League is following rulemaking for **SB 478 2015**, the Toxic-Free Kids Act, as new products are added to the rules.

2020

HB 4109 would ban the use of chlorpyrifos, a toxic nerve agency pesticide. The League [supports](#) and the bill passed the House and the Senate policy committee but died at the end of session.

**2021** *(Rev. 2021, Peggy Lynch)*

The League continued work to pass a Toxic Free Kids Program and provided testimony in support of **HB 2495**, although the bill did not pass again.

**2023** *(Rev. Oct. 2023, Peggy Lynch)*

[HB 3043](#), a bill that revises provisions relating to chemicals in children's products, was signed by the Governor and is effective as of Sept. 24, 2023. As a member of the Oregon Conservation Network, we were pleased to see the [OCN Letter](#) in support of [HB 3043](#), the Toxic Free Kids Act Modernization. LWVOR has engaged in this bill in past sessions.

[SB 546](#) requires Oregon Health Authority to adopt and maintain list of designated high priority chemicals of concern used in cosmetic products and to periodically review and revise list. The bill was amended and passed.

LWVOR provided [testimony](#) in support of [SB 426](#), the Toxics Free Schools bill, but again it did not pass the legislature.

## Seismic Risks

Adopted March 1995

**The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that all levels of government share the responsibility of coordinating, implementing and funding an effective program to mitigate Oregon's earthquake and tsunami hazards.**

**Priority must be given to mitigation that protects human life and safeguards critical life support systems.**

**The League supports:**

- **Educating the public about the grave significance of Oregon's earthquake and tsunami threat and encouraging preparedness.**
- **Improving the safety of transportation systems and establishing alternate routes around bridges and overpasses which are likely to be unsafe after an earthquake or tsunami.**

- Establishing tsunami warning signals and evacuation routes.
- Evaluating dams that threaten population centers and taking remedial actions such as reinforcing dams, and developing maps and downstream notification procedures.

LWVOR supports as essential elements of an effective earthquake and tsunami program:

**A. Comprehensive education efforts:**

1. All school children should be taught to understand Oregon's earthquake and tsunami hazards and how to respond to various situations and conditions that may arise.
2. Schools' earthquake and tsunami plans, education and drills should be monitored and analyzed for adequacy.

**HH. Improved preparedness:**

1. Federal, state, and local chain of command should be established and fully coordinated. The emergency communication system should be enhanced and regularly tested.
2. Emergency Services should be accessible and housed in safe buildings. Citizens should be encouraged to develop emergency plans, including supply kits.
3. When citing critical facilities, tsunami run up and inundation as well as seismic factors such as severe ground shaking, liquefaction, massive landslide potential, and subsidence should be considered.
4. Geological reports identifying property at risk should be on file and accessible to the public. Property that poses extreme hazards should be designated as unbuildable.

## Position History and Implementation - Seismic Risks

1993

LWVOR Convention adopted a two-year study that emphasized Seismic Risks and Preparedness in Oregon. Members of the League who formerly lived in California initiated the study. They realized that mitigation measures, which are actively carried out there, have been effective in saving lives and property.

1995

LWVOR submitted comments in support of two seismic bills during the 1995 legislative session and both bills passed. **SB 378** improved earthquake and tsunami education requirements and drills. The Oregon Seismic Safety Policy Advisory

Commission (OSSPAC) is proposing a voluntary 5-year Seismic Award Program for schools. Each year a phase of seismic preparedness would be tackled and awards and public acknowledgment given for schools successfully completing the project. In the past, school participation has been disappointing. OSSPAC is hoping LWVOR can improve the situation.

The Action Committee has discussed sending letters to principals of schools electing not to participate, and letters to the editors of local newspapers emphasizing the importance of school participation. **SB 378** set legal seismic and tsunami requirements for schools but was weak on provisions for monitoring and compliance. **SB 379** requires the establishment of tsunami inundation zones. Developers of new essential facilities, hazardous facilities and special occupancy structures in the tsunami zone are required to consult with the Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries (DOGAMI) for assistance in determining the impact of possible tsunamis and methods to mitigate the risk.

The Tsunami Hazard Maps of the Oregon Coast are now completed and available at coastal libraries. Public hearings on the maps and the draft administrative rules to comply with **SB 379** will be held in October. The final hearing will be December 11 at the Hatfield Science Center in Newport. The final publication of rules will be in 1996. DOGAMI expects substantial opposition from developers. LWVOR will submit comments in support of the implementation of **SB 379**. **SB 1057**, passed during the 1995 regular session of the Oregon Legislature, allows a municipality to adopt specified seismic rehabilitation plans, establishes a Seismic Rehabilitation Task Force, and limits admissibility of certain data as evidence in action for damages arising from building failure due to seismic activity. The liability ramifications for property owners will be a very volatile issue. Conflict-of-interest problems are likely for task force members.

The 1995 legislative session created the Seismic Rehabilitation Task Force to research and make recommendations to the 1997 Legislature. The Task Force was uniquely impressive for their diligence, intellect, and resourcefulness in obtaining state of the art information. On the basis of their research the task force recommended a program for seismic rehabilitation of essential and hazardous buildings. They also suggested viable funding sources. Most of their recommendations were incorporated in **HB 2139**.

LWVOR sent letters to State Representative Bob Repine and State Senator Gene Timms requesting a hearing but received no response. **HB 2139** was allowed to die in the committee without even a public hearing. The other missed seismic mitigation opportunities included bills that would have given tax credits for earthquake

insurance and rehabilitation, public education, and full disclosure of seismic hazards in real estate forms.

There are an increasing number of scientists who believe the Oregon Coast and possibly Portland should be changed to seismic code 4.

This would be strongly opposed by development, real estate and the construction industries. This is the cheapest way to improve seismic human safety and the people who benefit the most pay the most. Oregon may be able to improve some seismic preparedness through new administrative rules and building code revisions.

The Federal Emergency Management will be publishing new seismic structural requirements for both new buildings and rehabilitation of hazardous existing buildings for different seismic zones, hopefully, by the fall of 1997.

1997

The Oregon Legislature failed to pass any significant new laws to mitigate Oregon's serious seismic hazards and the threat to human safety.

2001

Three bills passed and were signed by the Governor (**SB 13, 14 & 15**) relating to risks relating to earthquakes. The first requires annual drills for state and local agency employees. **SB 14** and **15** require a survey of educational buildings and hospitals with various nebulous options for paying for rehabilitation. The rehabilitation deadline for school buildings is 2032; for hospitals, 2022. This represents only modest improvement over last session's inaction.

2002

LWVOR supported Measures 15 and 16 (November 2002), which authorized the state to issue bonds to fund seismic rehabilitation of public education and emergency services buildings. Both measures passed. These two bond measures were also supported by our Fiscal Policy position.

2013

The League supported the budget of the Dept. of Geology and Mineral Industries (**HB 5014**) to continue projects that provide information on tsunami inundation zones, landslides and other hazards.

2015

The League continues to follow the restructuring of the Dept. of Geology and Mineral Industries and the budget note regarding their business practices. The League

supports the work of the agency related to hazards and their regulation of the mining industry.

2020

SB 1537 addressed issues of Oregon's resiliency related to earthquakes and updating Oregon's plans on these safety issues. The League provided [testimony](#) in support. The bill passed committee but died in Ways and Means.

2023

The League provided [testimony](#) on the Dept. of Geology and Mineral Services budget ([SB 5510](#)). The [LFO recommendation](#) includes two Budget Notes on the new e-permitting system being funded.

The League provided [testimony](#) in support of [SB 220](#) that would have provided a fee to pay for implementation of a new e-permitting system for mining interests instead of using \$2 million in General Funds. However, the legislature chose to provide the \$2 million in GF. We also provided [testimony](#) in support of [SB 221](#) to provide ongoing funding for this new system and [testimony](#) on [SB 222](#) to allow DOGAMI to accept credit cards and to add the credit card fee to the permittees if they choose to use a credit card. SB 222 failed in the Senate.

2025 (Rev. Sept. 2025 Peggy Lynch)

The League provided [testimony](#) in support of [HB 2581](#), a bill that expands the duties of the State Resilience Officer by replacing the word "seismic" with the word "hazard" and expanding the hazard list to include other natural or manmade challenges Oregon is facing. The bill passed.

## Solid Waste

### National Position

**Solid Waste should be regarded as a resource and that although the major responsibility should be at the state and local levels, the federal government should play a greater role in managing solid waste. LWVUS supported the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976 (RCRA) and the Toxic Substance Control Act of 1976 (TSCA). In 1980 we supported Superfund. In 1992 LWVEF published "Recycling is More Than Collection". The League was a leader in efforts to pass legislation prohibiting the injection of toxic wastes into and above underground sources of drinking water, set location standards for siting waste-treatment, storage and disposal facilities, and permit land disposal of untreated hazardous waste ONLY as a last resort for selected substances.**

### Position Implementation—Solid Waste

1983

The League supported [SB 405](#), Opportunity to Recycle.

1989

Supported **SB 424** setting a surcharge on waste disposal to fund local recycling and household hazardous waste programs; supported **SB 990** to ban use of polystyrene foam and require deposit on wine cooler bottles. Failed.

The League supported OSPIRG **HB 2334** to reduce use of toxic substances. Bill became comprehensive **HB 3515**. Passed.

1991

League efforts centered on **SB 66**, the big omnibus recycling bill put together during the interim period by the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee. Many League interests prevailed including a statewide recycling goal of 50 percent and establishment of recycled newsprint standards. Not established were statewide mandatory hazardous waste collection and a statewide clearinghouse for recycling information. This is the only solid waste bill we testified on, although we followed several others, none of which passed.

1993

Eleven bills concerning recycling were introduced in the Legislature. Only three were passed by both Houses, and two of these were opposed by League. **SB 1009** eased the plastics recycling law passed by the 1991 Legislature. Under this bill the state won't enforce standards for plastics recycling for at least a year after it takes effect on January 1, 1995. **SB 641** allows the Legislature to delay enforcement for requirement for food processing, cosmetic, medical equipment, retail grocery and other plastics interests and to exempt rigid plastic packaging for certain medical devices and baby formula from meeting requirements to use recycled plastic in packaging. **SB 952** allows retailers to limit the number of returnable bottles to 144 from one customer on any one day. League testified against the watering down of the 1991 recycling bill, stating that the public is demanding and is ready to do this recycling, and that there are products already available that comply with the law's 1995 standards.

1995

Attempts to weaken plastics recycling laws were opposed by LWVOR as well as the Legislature and DEQ. **SB 279** passed, exempting food, but not beverage containers from plastic recycling requirements. The Legislature adjourned without considering a bill to gut the 1971 Bottle Bill and without passing an expanded measure which included containers for Snapple, bottled water, iced tea, and fruit juice. Therefore, an Expanded Bottle Bill initiative has been filed with the Secretary of State by OSPIRG. LWVOR will be collecting signatures as well as examining how the initiative process might be improved. A national marketplace for buying and selling recyclable trash has opened at the Chicago Board of Trade. It promises to boost recycling by setting quality

standards and publishing prices for used paper, glass, and plastics – a boon to small towns. Local Leagues may check with officials and dealers to take advantage of this opportunity.

1999

**SB 940** passed, postponing implementation Oregon's 50 percent recycled glass requirement goal until 2004.

2001

[See **Air Quality** for **SB 764** – Pollution Facility Tax Credits.]

2003

See **Air Quality, Energy Conservation, Hazardous Materials and Water Quality** re: LWVOR opposition to **HB 3562**.

2007

After many sessions of working on expanding Oregon's Bottle Bill, **SB 707** was passed this session. Although not as strong as we advocated, the bill adds "water and flavored water" to the definition of "beverage". However, it also establishes a Task Force to develop a plan to implement the expansion.

Also this session, **HB 2626** passed which establishes a statewide electronics recycling system, financed by manufacturers, that provides for the collection, transportation and recycling of certain televisions, computer monitors and a few other electronic devices.

2009

One of the biggest disappointments of the session was the lack of expansion of Oregon's Bottle Bill (**HB 2184**). Another bill offered at the end of session, **HB 3465**, would have required distributors to report on the amount of monies not refunded under the current bottle bill program, estimated at between \$20 and \$30 million. Look for this issue to come up again next session.

The League did support **SB 742** that would have set up a take-back program for any lighting products that contains mercury, although it did not pass. **HB 3060** was filed to set up a general "product stewardship" program where products that may harm the environment are "taken back" or recycled by the manufacturer after its useful life.

The concept was supported by the League but didn't get anywhere this session. **SB 320** would have required a disposal program for rechargeable batteries.

The one bill that did pass is **HB 3037**, which creates a paint stewardship pilot program with the goal of reducing paint waste, promoting paint reuse and developing a system of collecting, transporting and processing it in an environmentally sound fashion.

Paint manufacturers will work with the Department of Environmental Quality to implement the program. This project is another partnership between the consumer and the manufacturer of a particular product, in many ways like the E-cycle program created in 2007. Oregon is the first state to adopt this pilot program, which is likely to reduce the cost of managing this waste stream to the public.

2010

The League monitored **SB 1009**, a bill that would prohibit the use of plastic bags as checkout bags. This bill did not make it out of committee, but is expected to return in 2011. Retailers are concerned that individual cities may pass such bans, so they are interested in finding a compromise that will work statewide.

A disappointment was passage of **HB 3674**, which included a section allowing the Covanta municipal solid waste plant to receive renewable energy credits since the plant burns materials that could be reused or recycled.

2011

The League supported **SB 536**, a bill that would prohibit the use of plastic bags as checkout bags and allow grocers to charge 10 cents for paper bags. This bill did not make it out of committee. Individual cities are now considering passing such bans (The City of Portland as done so.)

**SB 529** would have required a process to ensure recycling of lighting that contains mercury. It did not make it out of committee. The League continues to support bills that promote product stewardship.

The League opposed **HB 3597** that would have allowed tax credits for plastics pyrolysis and would have expanded the definition of “recycling facility” in ORS 469.185 to include equipment used for processing waste plastic into synthetic crude oil. It would have specified that conversion of waste plastic that cannot be economically recycled to oil using pyrolysis be considered recycling. This bill did not pass.

**HB 3145** modernizes the state’s Bottle Bill by expanding the deposit law to cover containers more than or equal to 4 fluid ounces and less than or equal to 1.5 fluid liters beginning January 1, 2018. It excludes distilled liquor, wine, dairy or plant-based milks, and infant formula. It increases deposit and refund value of beverage

containers to not less than 10 cents by January 1, 2016. Directs OLCC to approve one beverage container redemption center pilot project in a city with population of less than 300,000. Requires pilot project redemption center to accept and pay refund value on up to 300 individual empty beverage containers per person per day. Allows participating dealers within one-and-one-half miles of pilot project redemption center to refuse to accept return containers but continues requirement for others to accept returns.

2012

The League stopped an effort (**HB 4081**) to allow pyrolysis to be considered recycling instead of energy recovery.

The League supported **SB 1512** that will reduce the amount of mercury in lighting. Supported by industry, the bill will protect the health of our children. This bill passed with bipartisan support.

2013

**SB 117** was passed that allows for the establishment of more beverage container redemption centers around the state.

**HB 2048** continues the paint stewardship program to keep paint out of landfills.

2021 *(Rev. 2021, Peggy Lynch)*

The League engaged in recycling bills and supported **SB 582** to modernize Oregon's recycling program and require producer responsibilities for their products.

**See also Nuclear Waste section on SB 246 and radioactive waste.**

2022

The League supported expansion of Oregon's Bottle Bill to include cans of wine (**SB 1520**).

2023 *(rev. Oct 2023, Peggy Lynch)*

**SB 543**, prohibits food vendors from using polystyrene foam containers in sales of prepared food. LWVOR provided [testimony](#). The Governor has signed the bill which takes effect Jan. 1, 2024.

**SB 544**, directs the Environmental Quality Commission to establish a program for source reduction of single-use plastic food ware and single-use packaging and

achieve 25 percent source reductions compared to 2023 levels by 2030. LWVOR provided [testimony](#); however, the bill did not pass.

[SB 545](#), directs the State Department of Agriculture and Oregon Health Authority to adopt rules allowing consumers to use their own containers for refilling with food at food establishment. The League provided [testimony](#) in support. The bill passed, was signed by the Governor on May 8 and is immediately effective.

The Right to Repair bill, [SB 542](#), required original equipment manufacturer to make available repair information to owner of consumer electronic equipment or independent repair provider. The League provided [testimony](#) supporting the bill, but pointed out two areas where changes should be made: one dealing with clarifying what was included under the bill and the other dealing with the enforcement method. Preferred versions were included in the New York law. The bill did not pass this session but we expect a version to return in 2024 or 2025.

2024 (rev. June 2024, Peggy Lynch)

LWVOR signed a [letter](#) written by a coalition of environmental groups and submitted separate written [testimony](#) supporting SB 1596, a bill to require manufacturers of electronic devices to make the means of repair of those devices available to consumers and independent repair providers. Extending the life of electronic devices will reduce waste, greenhouse gas emissions and raw material usage. The bill was signed by the Governor.

The Environmental Quality Commission adopted rules to implement the Plastic Pollution and Recycling Modernization Act on Nov. 22<sup>nd</sup>. The League supported SB 582 (2021) that instructed this Act be created and adopted.

2025 (Rev. Sept. 2025 Peggy Lynch)

The League followed discussions around Oregon's bottle bill. One proposal roundly opposed by most Oregonians was to add a deposit cost in order to fund wildfire expenses. Another bill, [SB 992](#), was amended and passed to encapsulate the various policy updates from this session.

## Water Policy – Quality and Quantity

Adopted April 2011; Replaced positions on Water Policy and Planning (adopted January 1977; revised March 1985) and Water Quality (adopted January 1969)

**The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that water is a resource that should be managed for the benefit of the public and as sustainable habitat for all life forms. The League supports Oregon state policies and statutes that promote comprehensive long-range planning for conservation and management of ground and surface water and the improvement of water quality. Regulating agencies that govern the protection and conservation of water should be transparent and provide the public easy access to information.**

**The League supports management approaches that maximize interagency communication to include but are not limited to:**

1. Uniform definitions of “beneficial uses” and other terminology for both quality and quantity management,

2. **Coordination of activities including water allocation, measurement, monitoring/testing, enforcement of water law and the promotion of water conservation,**

3. Well-defined statutory enforcement procedures and the funding to protect water resources held in common, and
4. Recognition of the variability of local/basin/watershed quality and quantity needs.

**The League recognizes the application of historic prior appropriations of water but supports modifications in order to accomplish the following:**

- 1. Consider both in-stream and out-of-stream beneficial uses of water,**
- 2. Facilitate changes from one beneficial use of water to another,**
- 3. Provide incentives for water user conservation,**
- 4. Incorporate evolving scientific understanding of natural water systems in waste management,**
- 5. Develop priority uses for water in times of shortage, and**
- 6. Expand protection of in-stream beneficial uses such as minimum perennial stream flow.**

**The League believes that the interdependence of land use planning and water planning must be recognized and required at all levels of government:**

- 1. Local comprehensive plans, watershed plans, basin plans, state and regional plans should be coordinated and complementary.**
- 2. Roles and responsibilities of all decision makers and agencies affecting water resource and quality issues should be clearly defined.**

**The League believes that all planning for ground and surface water should include consideration for both the quality of the water and the availability of water to meet the beneficial uses. Planning at all levels should consider existing water rights and current and projected uses. The League acknowledges that this may be best accomplished at the watershed/basin level if adequate funding and professional staffing are available. Basin/ watershed water management should be efficient and economical, responsive to public need, flexible to allow for changes over time, and lead to conservation and allocation of the resource in the public interest. Transfers of water between basins should require coordination with planning and water use in both basins.**

**The League recognizes that effective planning for water protection and use is most effective with a complete inventory of the water resource including all domestic wells and encourages moving toward this goal. Priority efforts should be directed to geographic areas with identified problems and vulnerabilities.**

**The League opposes degradation of all of Oregon's surface and ground water. The League supports policies and legislation that integrate water quality into resource management and include but are not limited to standards for:**

- 1. Potable water and drinking water treatment facilities,**

2. Placement and inspection of septic tanks and alternative individual treatment systems,
3. In-stream surface water quality for recreational use, including primary contact sports, commercial and sport fishing, and habitat protection,
4. Ground water quality for recognized beneficial uses,
5. Agricultural, municipal, forestry and industrial wastewater discharge and runoff,
6. Uniform water quality testing protocols– updated as scientific methodologies improve,
7. Permitting and enforcement procedures with agency funding adequate to ensure timely compliance,
8. Adequate, well maintained sewers and sewage treatment facilities and
9. Control and treatment of runoff from non-pervious surfaces.

The League recognizes that conservation strategies for surface and ground water, including but not limited to incentives, regulations and rationing in emergency situations, are needed to meet future demand. Individuals, agriculture, municipalities, forestry and industry should be encouraged to develop practices to reduce water usage and minimize pollution. Support should be provided for upgrading and maintaining the equipment necessary for water conservation. The League supports the need to build resiliency and innovation into water planning in order to address climate change impacts.

Public involvement should be encouraged throughout the water management and planning processes. The processes should be transparent and include educational components.

The League acknowledges that all water users must share in the cost of water management. Rate payers should have primary responsibility for infrastructure maintenance, delivery and conservation. The state should have primary responsibility for planning, research, data collection and public outreach. Permit fees should be a significant contributor to the development of infrastructure.

## Position Implementation - Water Policy and Planning

1983

This legislative session was the first in many years to direct attention in depth to concern for the management of the state's water resources. A number of bills were introduced, which caused lawmakers to recognize a growing water crisis.

Two bills of significance which the League supported were passed. **SB 225** directed the Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to submit to the Water Resources Directory by a certain time a list of their 75 highest priority minimum streamflow point requests. It directed the Water Policy Review Board to adopt, modify, or reject these requests after making a finding that such a minimum streamflow rate is appropriate to support aquatic life and minimize pollution.

These minimum streamflow requests must be acted on within one year of the date received by the Water Resources Director and that date becomes the priority date for any minimum streamflow set. The bill further directs the priority dates of any minimum streamflow adopted in the future will be the date of request, not the date of adoption. This bill also established a Joint Legislative Committee on Water Policy to oversee the Water Resources Department and the Water Policy Review Board and to make recommendations to the Legislature for such actions as they deem necessary to the better management of the state water resources. The committee sunsets July 1, 1989.

**SB 523** established a Strategic Water Planning Group, chaired by the governor, consisting of representatives of the Department of Energy, Environmental Quality, Agriculture, Fish and Wildlife, Forestry, Geology, the Land Conservation and Development Commission, Division of State Lands, and the Water Resources Director.

This group is to develop a multi-agency water management plan for river basin management, coordinating surface and groundwater planning and integrating water quantity and water quality planning. The plan developed was tested in one river basin, the John Day basin. This act sunsets July 1, 1985 but efforts will be made during the 1985 session to expand and continue this program of agency coordination in the management of Oregon's water resources.

1985

League supported bills that provided a system to better define the roles and responsibilities of decision makers concerned with water related policies. A new Water Resources Commission was created in **SB 287** with full policy and rulemaking authority over the Water Resources Department. A hydro bill, **HB 2990**, was passed which established state policies and strict standards for citing hydroelectric plants, recognizing the need for land use and water planning and cumulative efforts. League supported state funding for assistant water masters, but **SB 294** passed with only

county and user funding. Another bill establishing the state primacy for water was passed, SB 904.

1987

This Legislature was particularly productive in the area of water resources of Oregon. League actively supported these bills. One of the most far-reaching bills to pass converts existing minimum perennial stream flows to in-stream water rights after review by the Water Resources Commission (WRC). Heretofore, minimum perennial streamflow's have been set by rule and could be changed at any time, but a water right is set for perpetuity. (This new law does not affect existing private water rights for out-of-stream use.) It allows the State Department of Fish and Wildlife, the DEQ and the Parks and Recreation Division of the Department of Transportation to request from WRC in-stream water rights for streams with public uses. It also allows for the purchase, lease, or donation of private water rights for conversion to in-stream water rights, and it allows state agencies to request the WRC to reserve unappropriated water for future economic development.

The WRC now has the additional authority to set minimum perennial streamflow's to maintain recreational values. It made the Strategic Water Management Group (established 1983) a permanent entity to monitor hydroelectric project applications pending before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and to coordinate the refinement and updating of the state's comprehensive plan for water resources. The WRC also has the authority to initiate proceedings in areas of ground and surface water interference and the authority to control wells. The WRC will develop standards for the approval of ground water recharge permits. The purpose of these new laws is to help the Water Resources Department determine who the current 100,000 or more water right holders are, to what plots of land the water rights are attached, and the amount of their water rights.

The Legislature established a procedure for water right holders to conserve water, which they may offer back to the WRC to allocate to in-stream flow, or with the WRC approval, lease to another person. The Watershed Enhancement Board was established to develop a management program for the enhancement of riparian areas and associated uplands. It requires state agencies to coordinate watershed activities with the board.

2005

The League opposed a bill that reversed a recent court case that said municipal water suppliers, like other water users, must have a timely need for water before they can get a permit to take water from Oregon's rivers or streams.

The bill that passed does not require a review representing public interests (such as fish) to compete for use of the water. Another bill passed that again overturned court decisions, allowing mitigation rather than minimum stream flows on the Deschutes River, as established under the State Scenic Waterway Act for the Deschutes.

2007

The League supported an increase in the Water Resources Dept.'s budget which will provide staff and monies to do more research on water issues in Oregon. We also supported **HB 2564** which would have required water usage measurement and **HB 2566** which would have set a fee for new exempt wells and reduced the amount of water permitted for new ground water wells. Despite extensive discussion, neither bill got out of committee. Both bills would have increased our knowledge of water usage in the state.

2009

Water issues were a priority for the League this session. With partners, we supported **SB 193**, a bill that set parameters for developing a statewide water resources strategy. We also supported **SB 194** to implement the Water Resources Department's Strategic Measurement Plan, **SB 787** that set certain requirements protecting stream flow in order to be eligible for water supply development funding, and **SB 788** regarding peak and ecological flows.

These bills ended up in one form or another in **HB 3369**, called the Water Resources Investment Act, a bill worked throughout the session by Rep. Bob Jenson of Pendleton and Rep. Jefferson Smith of Portland. This bill creates a number of funding systems for water resource projects (see also **SB 5505**, **5534** & **5535**) while also setting criteria to protect the public's interest in Oregon's water. \$500,000 was authorized for continuation of the Water Conservation, Reuse and Storage Investment Fund, a grant program. Two staff members were authorized to help the Water Resources Commission as they develop a statewide water resources strategy along with the Department of Environmental Quality and Department of Fish and Wildlife.

**HB 2231** set new fees for water well constructors to help fund groundwater studies, and **HB 2232** relates to the drilling of geotechnical holes. "Water in Oregon-Not a Drop to Waste", Part 1 of our League study, was shared with legislators and was helpful to them and to us as we worked on water issues this session.

The Water Resources Department's budget took a huge hit during the first round of budget cut considerations, due to the fact that much of its funding is General Fund. A number of bills were filed to set fees to help fund this important agency. **SB 740**, which would have charged a small annual fee (\$100) to holders of certain water rights, was offered but rejected. Some water lawyers suggested that this fee might not be legal or, at minimum, is a new tax, requiring that it originate in the House and must pass by a three-fifths vote. It was also argued that it was a "taking" since these are long time rights and not new water rights being charged. This bill died without that issue being resolved.

**SB 788**, a bill that originally required a license to assure that water storage projects protect peak and ecological flows necessary to maintain stream habitat was amended to increase current fees and set new fees for a variety of permits and other work done by the Department. This additional cost recovery saved a number of important department positions that ensure good management of Oregon's water supply. The League did ask that fees not increase beyond 50% as the job of this department deserves public support as well. Among the new fees is \$300 for recording a new exempt well, with the monies to be used for ground water studies, monitoring, administration and enforcement. Fees under this bill are scheduled to return to 2007 levels in 2013, so a broad public discussion will be needed to assure this department is adequately funded in the future.

Again, the League worked to change the rules pertaining to wells from groundwater for domestic use, called "exempt wells". Currently rules allow up to 15,000 gallons a day be withdrawn. **HB 2859** would have reduced that withdrawal to 1,000 gallons. Action looks forward to Part 2 of our Water Study, since this issue is one of many that came out of our first study.

Many League members expressed support for **HB 2080**, directing the Environmental Quality Commission (EQC) to adopt rules for gray water reuse and disposal system permits. The bill allows and encourages waste water from baths, showers, bathroom and kitchen sinks to be used to water lawns and gardens. This issue has been raised during many local League meetings about water around the state.

The Water Resources Commission has begun work on an integrated water resources strategy for Oregon. With the additional staffing from **HB 3369**, **SB 5534** and **SB 5535**, the League will need to monitor this work to assure a broad public outreach and provide input related to our positions on water.

2009

We were disappointed that **HB 3661**, a bill that would have limited domestic use of an exempt well for a single family to 5,000 gallons a day, did not get out of committee. This was in spite of the fact that the Water Resources Department said that it would be highly unlikely that any family could beneficially use that much water. The League provided written testimony in support of this bill (as LC 99) and oral testimony at a public hearing. The bill also would have reinstated the Water Resources Commission's ability to regulate wells in critical or limited groundwater areas.

The League monitored **HB 3602** that allowed a small hydroelectric facility in Umatilla County to continue after complying with current rules regarding fish passage. We also monitored **SB 1060** that would have originally codified the Attorney General's opinion related to public rights on our waterways. This bill was amended to create a Task Force on this issue but did not make it out of committee. However, it is expected that the Secretary of State will convene a Task Force on this issue.

The League provided testimony on the work plan and issue papers developed by the Integrated Water Resources Strategy project, enabled by **HB 3369** (2009). We will continue to follow this 3-year project that is expected to address clean water needs in Oregon for the next 50 years.

2011

The Water Resources Department budget included monies to continue the Integrated Water Resources Strategy. A final report is due to the Legislature by December 2012. The League opposed **HB 3408** which now allows irrigation reservoirs outright on exclusive farm use lands. We also opposed a change in the ability of the Water Resources Commission to inspect certain dams. It did not make it out of committee.

2020

**HB 4070** would have built on prior legislation by adding money to the on-site septic loan program which the League continues to [support](#). The bill passed the policy committee but died in Ways and Means.

**HB 4077** would have required domestic water wells to be tested. The League [supported](#) but the bill only had a public hearing in committee.

**HB 4071** would have addressed harmful algal blooms by providing resources for the Dept. of Environmental Quality. The League [supported](#) and the bill passed the policy committee but died in Ways and Means.

**HB 4069** would have required certain water users who are already required to measure their use to report that use. The League [supported](#) but the bill only had a public hearing in the policy committee.

The League served on a rules advisory committee and recommended an increase in water quality fee increases. The Environmental Quality Commission approved the increases.

HB 2594 was to address protection of drinking water sources in or near forestlands. The League provided [testimony](#) in support. The bill only had a public hearing and died in committee.

## Position History and Implementation - Water Quality

1967

The League supported municipal sewage treatment facilities and increased funds and power for the state Sanitary Authority (now the Environmental Quality Commission), based on regional and national League positions.

1971

Included in the 20 environmental bills the League successfully supported this session was control of oil spills in water.

1973

Legislation was supported to coordinate environmental statutes and to place the regulation of subsurface sewage systems under the jurisdiction of the Department of Environmental Quality.

The League supported legislation that gave Boundary Commissions review authority over extension of water service. The League also worked for legislation for the Oregon Environmental Protection Agency, a shorelines management act, and a bill to coordinate resource agencies, all of which failed.

1981

The Oregon Legislature passed a Safe Drinking Water Bill which placed the administration of drinking water programs under the Oregon Health Department with supplemental funds to come from the General Fund. Administration and funding of the program were the controversial issues in the bill.

1983

The League testified in favor of finding an alternative to lead solder to avoid contamination of drinking water in pipes.

1987

League supported with a letter to each legislator the Oregon Superfund, **SB 122**, which passed and will allow identification, assessment and cleanup of toxic waste dumps in the state. We also supported **SB 115**, concerning Leaking Underground Storage Tanks, requiring people with underground storage tanks to monitor them, detect leaks and improve future building materials for the containers, which passed. Both laws are important in the protection of groundwater quality and safety.

1989

Supported **SB 423**, a statewide groundwater protection act, which passed.

1991

Most of the legislative action on water issues concerned specific needs to protect water. Among the bills the League followed were **SB 203** and **915**. **SB 203** limits the amount of water to be used in new toilets. **SB 915** prohibits phosphates in house laundry. There is also a provision in **SB 915** to gradually eliminate phosphates in dishwashing detergents.

1993

The League supported two bills relating to water during the 1993 session. The most important dealt with wellhead protection and was a ten-year, phased-in program to identify contamination sites, sites which could be prevented from contamination, and begin cleanup and public education. The federal Safe Drinking Water Act of 1989 mandates such a program. However, the bill never got out of the House Natural Resources committee.

The DEQ will try to work with localities on site identification and public education about prevention of contamination and the need to protect our drinking water supply. We also supported a bill coming from the Strategic Water Management Program, which would promote local watershed management policies, with partnerships among federal, state, and local agencies, and provide for citizen participation. This measure did pass and was signed by the governor.

1995

At this time, (November 1995), the fate of the national Safe Drinking Water Act and the Clean Water Act is not known, but it seems likely that Congress will cut the appropriations for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). A good portion of the funding for Oregon's Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) comes from EPA, which will hinder this state agency. Local Leagues should be aware and document any deterioration of water quality in their rivers and/or drinking water systems. Such information will be valuable in framing a strategy for action during upcoming sessions of the state Legislature and Congress.

1999

A very disturbing bill passed, SB 1189, requiring DEQ to provide a new public process for enforcement of water quality violations at the request of a person who has received a notice of civil penalty or enforcement action. The legality of this measure under the federal Clean Water enforcement structure is being questioned. The measure as passed may shield a party from third party lawsuits, which is allowed under the Clean Water Act.

**SB 3225** passed and was signed by the governor dealing with the non-parks lottery funding for watershed enhancement and salmon recovery required by Ballot Measure

66. Similar to the fate of parks funding [see **Parks Position**], lottery funding was used to "backfill" for decreased General Fund allocations.

2001

**HB 2239** requires small public water systems to come into compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act. Both houses passed the measure nearly unanimously. Funding

was allocated to help in implementation. [See [Air Quality](#) for SB 764 – Pollution Facility Tax Credits.]

2003

See [Air Quality](#), [Energy Conservation](#) and [Hazardous Materials](#) re: LWVOR opposition to **HB 3562**. LWVOR supported **HB 2255**, requiring fees from water suppliers subject to the federal Safe Drinking Water Act. The bill died in committee on adjournment. The Division of State Lands' wetlands programs received much attention during the session. LWVOR opposed a number of bills (all of which failed) aimed at destroying or crippling Oregon's wetland regulatory program. **HB 3006** and **SB 645** were duplicate bills redefining wetlands. **HB 2431** and **HB 3519** suffered gut and stuff orgies and died in committee on adjournment. LWVOR supported **HB 2899**, which streamlined the wetland mitigation banking process. The bill passed.

On the federal level, LWVOR supported **H.R. 962** and **S. 473**, which were designed to maintain the existing federal definition for wetlands under the Clean Water Act. LWVOR also commented to EPA that the existing definition should be maintained in their rules. LWVOR used LWVUS comments as background both at the state Legislature and in comments to EPA.

2005

The League supported measures requiring identification and boundaries ultimately phasing out of "toxic mixing zones" in the Willamette River. These zones, which are identified by DEQ, allow dischargers to pollute by dilution in specified areas at the discharge points. None of the measures passed.

2007

The League has a long history of working for safe drinking water. **SB 156** establishes statutory authorization of the Safe Drinking Water Advisory Committee. **HB 2187** requires fees for the inspection of public drinking water systems. Agency budgets are not adequate to support these inspections. The League is represented on the current Safe Drinking Water Advisory Committee.

2009

The League is a member of the Drinking Water Advisory Committee for the Department of Human Services. We were proud to champion **SB 739** that requires the seller of any real property that has a well supplying groundwater for domestic use to test for arsenic or other contaminants as necessary and notify the buyer and the Department. It is estimated that over 600,000 Oregonians get their drinking water from domestic wells.

We were disappointed when **SB 598** did not get out of committee. This bill would have required drug manufacturers to establish a drug take-back program, keeping them out of our water and wastewater systems. This is another issue that came out of our water study. However, **HB 2535** did pass to create the Charitable Prescription Drug Program to allow Oregonians to donate their unused prescription drugs to uninsured and underinsured people who could not otherwise afford them.

2010

See [Water](#) above for information on the Integrated Water Resources Strategy, meant to connect issues of water quality and quantity with ecological needs.

2011

See [Water Policy and Planning](#) above for information on the Integrated Water Resources Strategy, meant to connect issues of water quality and quantity with ecological needs.

The League supported **SB 707** that would have required a septic system inspection. That bill and **SB 83** that would have created a loan fund for repair or replacement of failing septic systems did not pass. However, the DEQ budget request included a plan to deal with coastal septic issues as required by the federal government.

**SB 945** would have required a reduction in the use of copper in brake pads. CA and WA have already passed similar legislation but it could not make it out of this legislature. Because the copper filings end up in our water and other states are already requiring this change so the requirement would not affect the industry, the League supported this bill.

2012

**SB 1582** was passed to allow an independent scientifically-based review of wetlands delineations should the applicant object to the decision of the Dept. of State Lands. The League worked to assure the decisions continue to be determined by wetlands scientists and that a review occurs every 5 years as required by the Environmental Protection Agency.

The League continues to support the work on the Integrated Water Resources Strategy, Oregon's first statewide water plan, and will hope for adoption of the plan by the end of 2012. The League actively participated in preparing the draft plan.

The Dept. of State Lands is considering asking permission to “assume” permitting for 404 wetlands permits from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The League is again involved in this discussion.

## Position History and Implementation - Water Policy—Quantity and Quality

2007

The LWVOR Convention adopted a 30-month update titled Water Resources of Oregon.

2013

The League testified in support of **SB 217** that would have created a water rights management fee. The bill did not make it out of committee, but we will continue to work for the concept of having water rights holders provide some annual funding for managing this system. We also supported **HB 2259** continuing the 50/50 (General Fund vs. applicant) share of fees for water transactions. The bill finally passed Ways and Means with some adjustments. The League supported **HB 2257** that would have allowed water rights holders to apply to change the name and/or address on certificates only. It did not make it out of committee.

**SB 839** passed to provide a path to new storage projects while addressing environmental issues. Bonding was approved for feasibility studies on possible storage projects in the Deschutes and Willamette Basins and implementation of the Columbia River Umatilla Solutions Teams agreement.

We supported **HB 3172**, as filed, to address the crisis in failing septic systems throughout Oregon. The bill was amended and passed to simply require more notice to buyers at time of land sale. It is unclear if the Environmental Protection Agency will accept this solution for the Coastal Zone. The League has continued to provide testimony to the Environmental Quality Commission on rulemaking for this issue and to push for a grant or loan program to help low income homeowners repair or replace failing systems

We supported **SB 838** that imposes a moratorium until January 2018 on suction dredge mining. The bill passed that allows only 850 permits for the short term and requires DEQ and DSL, along with a Governor’s Task Force, to recommend a resolution to this contentious and water quality destructive practice. We will continue to follow this issue because of the nexus with clean water.

The League opposed **HJR 25** that would have referred a constitutional amendment to the voters prohibiting fees or taxes on exempt water wells.

We opposed **SJM 10** that would have transferred 1.6 million acres from the federal government to the Dept. of Forestry because the Forest Practices Action does not provide enough protection against stream and nonpoint pollution and could jeopardize the source of water for many communities.

**HB 3364**, a bill that mandates all state agencies to coordinate their efforts, track their strategies and find alternatives to pesticides on public lands, passed and was signed into law.

2014

Water was a focus of the 2014 Legislature. The League watched **HB 4044, 4064** and **SB 1572**, which would have required each well be proven connected to surface water, instead of using a scientific model to assume that connection. These bills died in committee.

The League provided testimony to the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission after serving on their External Budget Advisory Committee related specifically to General Funds for department positions that support data collection and research on water quality and quantity, with emphasis on support for positions related to the Integrated Water Resources Strategy.

The League provided comments to help guide the Water Resources Department in development of “place-based planning” under the Integrated Water Resources Strategy.

The League continued to serve on the Dept. of Environmental Quality’s Blue Ribbon Committee related to water permitting and budgets. The League also participates in informal budget discussions at the Dept. of Water Resources.

2015

The League supported **SB 830** to remove the moratorium and direct the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to do rulemaking on a consolidated permit program related to suction dredge mining. It did not pass, so DEQ and the Department of State Lands are required to implement the moratorium under SB 838 (2013) by January 1, 2016.

The League supported **SB 266** to fund 2-3 large geographic areas of the state to do place-based water planning, as recommended in the Integrated Water Resources Strategy. We also supported **SB 246**, which would have set up an on-site septic loan program. This bill did not pass, but we expect to support a version in 2016 and/or 2017. The League worked with others in rulemaking on implementation of **SB 839** (2013) that will provide the guidance for the lottery and general fund bonding in **HB 5005/5006** and **HB 5030**.

The League worked on **SB 412**, related to dredge materials placed on uplands, to be sure public health continued to be addressed. And worked with others on **SB 829** that establishes methodologies for the assessment of waters of the state so that there would be public involvement, but not too cumbersome so as to reduce water quality. The League supported **SB 246**, which would have set up an on-site septic loan program for low income Oregonians because failing septic systems are a major public health and water quality issue. The bill did not pass because of the concern of setting up a new program, but the need was recognized. The concept is expected to go forth in 2016 to get the policy established so that the Dept. of Environmental Quality can seek grant funds to begin an education program at a minimum.

The League commented on **HB 5002**, the Dept. of Agriculture budget, in support of the Pesticide Stewardship Partnership and Water Quality programs. We commented on **HB 5018**, the Dept. of Environmental Quality budget, in support of water quality program funding. We commented on **HB 5037**, the Dept. of State Lands budget, to continue work on wetlands, other waters of the state and continue their work on the Portland Harbor cleanup. We commented on **HB 5042**, the Water Resources Dept. budget, continuing our support of implementation of the Integrated Water Resources Strategy, including more data on groundwater.

The League worked behind the scenes on the lottery and general obligation bonding bills related to water requests (**HB 5030 & HB 5005**). We supported groundwater work at the Dept. of Geology and Mineral Industries (**SB 5512**), but were unsuccessful. We supported an increase in fees to the Oregon Marine Board (**SB 5522** and **5525**) to address stopping aquatic invasive species from entering the state because they threaten water infrastructure.

We commented on **SB 5528**, the budget for State Parks, due to their role in addressing Scenic Waterways and climate change risks, especially at our coastal state parks. We commented on the Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife budget (**SB 5511** with fees in **SB 247** and State Police enforcement in **SB 5531**) with an emphasis on water quality,

focusing on the importance of scientists to protect the public's interest. The League, in conjunction with Curry and Clackamas local leagues, supported the designation of portions of the Chetco and the Molalla Rivers as scenic waterways.

The Parks and Recreation Commission and Water Resources Commission so designated. The League actively worked with others on the Water Resources Dept. budget, **HB 5042**. We were successful in seeing increased funding for their work.

The League has a new member serving on the Oregon Health Authority's Drinking Water Advisory Committee.

The League worked with others on **SB 613**, a comprehensive aerial spray bill that did not pass. Curry County provided testimony in support of **HB 3549** that increased fees on pesticides to support increased oversight at the Dept. of Agriculture and required the Dept. of Forestry to increase their notification system.

The League commented on the need for increased groundwater studies during a hearing on **HB 3169**. The bill did not pass, but the Water Resources Dept. got a bit more money for these studies during the budget process.

2016

The League followed **HB 4113** that establishes a Task Force on Drought Emergency Response. A League member has been appointed to serve on the 5-year update of the Integrated Water Resources Strategy. We supported **SB 1563** that authorizes DEQ to award grants to establish a low interest loan program for repairing, replacing or upgrading onsite septic systems or connecting to a sewer system, if available. It passed and was signed by the Governor. We hope to increase the grant funds in 2017. We supported a request that was granted to the Water Resources Dept. for \$705,288 to facilitate a groundwater study for the greater Harney Valley.

The League worked with others on **SB 1517**, a bill that would have reduced the ability of organizations to create, restore or enhance wetlands in farm zones. The bill was significantly amended to become a pilot project in the Tillamook area that would allow for more local government control.

The League supported **SB 1529** as amended to allow homeowners associations to remove regulations regarding watering of lawns during an officially declared drought. We encouraged others to create drought plans and support groundwater studies to get ahead of potential areas of shortages.

The League worked with others in support of **HB 4125**, the Safe Well Water bill, requiring additional testing of residential wells particularly in ground water contaminate areas and would have established a Safe Ground Water Fund to make grants and loans available to low-income homeowners, similar to the onsite septic program. The bill died in Ways and Means since this would be a new program that would require future funding in a time when adequate revenue was of concern.

The League monitored **SB 1530**, a bill to modify **SB 838** from 2013 related to suction dredge mining. It was an attempt to address the moratorium enacted as of January 1, 2016, remove upland mining, and protect more streams from this type of mining. It died in Ways and Means.

## 2017

The League, along with partners (including signing on to a floor letter), supported **SB 812**, a bill that improves the statewide grants program for failing septic systems passed in 2016 and **SB 383** that provided another \$1.5 million for the grant and loan program. They both passed. We worked with others on the Clean Water State Revolving Fund to assure that local jurisdictions can access an increased funding with longer terms of repayment.

We worked behind the scenes with local leagues and other partners on **SB 3** that addresses suction dredge mining, protecting salmonid streams while allowing this mining process in other parts of the state.

We provided oral testimony in opposition to **HB 2786** that would have reduced protections of our wetlands. The bill died in committee.

The League supported **HB 2320**, a bill that would have expanded fees to address all non-motorized boats instead of just those over 10 feet in length. It died in committee. The League supported **HB 2295**, a bill that increases permit fees to help share costs for staffing related to Oregon's water. We specifically focused on increasing fees to assure dams are inspected in a timely manner.

The League provided testimony in support of **HB 2706**, a bill that would implement a Water Rights Management Fee to support stable staffing at the Water Resources Dept. We have supported this concept in the past. We also supported **HB 2705**, requiring more water measurement, and voiced general support for **HB 2707** that would have required more groundwater studied. **HB 2706 and 2707** were passed in committee to

Ways and Means where they died. **HB 2705** was passed to House Rules where it also died.

We provided testimony on **HB 3427**, a bill that would require high hazard dams to have emergency plans. We also supported a permanent staffer at the Water Resources Dept. to help with dam inspections.

The League engaged with the Water Resources Commission on a new draft of the Integrated Water Resources Strategy. The Water Resources Commission adopted the update in December.

The League continues to follow the 2015 budget note around water quality permitting and will work with others to monitor that progress.

2018

The League advocated for monies so the Water Resources Dept. (WRD) could have a second team to work on basin studies related to groundwater. We were not successful. However, there was a budget note in **SB 5702** requiring WRD to study Oregon's high hazard dams and prepare a plan for the 2019 legislature.

The League shared the recently adopted update of the Integrated Water Resources Strategy at the LWVUS Convention in June.

The League is participating in a Work Group related to wetlands issues around the definition and regulation of agricultural ditches, statewide mapping of wetlands, mitigation banking and again whether or not Oregon should "assume" Army Corps of Engineers' "404" removal/fill permitting for some areas in Oregon.

The Oregon Health Authority adopted rules around toxic algal blooms and monitoring of cyanotoxins in drinking water. The League has a new member serving on the State Drinking Water Advisory Committee and will follow this issue. The Sept. Emergency Board provided \$380,000 General Funds to DEQ to continue testing for harmful algal blooms.

2019

The League continues to participate in the Oregon Health Authority's Drinking Water Advisory Committee and supported **SB 27** relating to Oregon Drinking Water Quality Act fees. We supported this bill because Oregon's drinking water program is currently underfunded. SB 27 authorized a change in the fee structure that helped address these

inequities. The bill passed and the League will be involved in new rulemaking related to this bill.

We supported **HB2860**, the Safe Well Water Bill, because it addresses ongoing issues with well water contamination that are linked to serious health concerns. The bill did not pass, in part due to implementation costs.

The League continues to engage in a water quality stakeholder group for the Dept. of Environmental Quality. We participated in rulemaking to increase water quality fees. The League continues to work with others to advance a “[water vision](#)” for Oregon to continue our work on the Integrated Water Resources Strategy. We supported **HCR 33** that would have urged work on this important plan. The bill did not pass. League members will participate in meetings during 2019 and 2020 to continue to develop Oregon’s 100-year water vision.

The League supported **HB 2085**, to update our dam safety policies and increase regulation of non-federal public and private dams in Oregon. We will work with others on rulemaking to implement the bill. We also supported funding for planning replacement of the two high risk dams in Newport.

The League supported **HB 2084** that extended the Place-Based Planning program for the current four planning areas. Harmful algal blooms were a topic of discussion during the session. A work group will consider legislation for the 2021 session. We supported **SB 756** to continue the onsite septic grant and loan program. It did not pass but monies were granted to DEQ to increase funding through their grant program.

**HB 2436**, a bill that would allow the Dept. of State Lands to put together a program where Oregon would partially “assume” the responsibilities of the Army Corps of Engineers for some portion of Oregon’s removal/fill permit requests, passed after a last minute amendment was proposed that the League assisted in defeating. The League will be engaged during the interim as the discussion on “assumption” quickly moves toward a bill in 2020 or 2021 to authorize a petition to the Environmental Protection Agency. **HB 2437**, a new process for cleaning agricultural ditches in wetlands areas, passed. The League was neutral on this bill after many compromises were adopted. We supported **HB 2438**, a bill that would have provided monies for a Mid-Valley mitigation bank and additional staffing for the Dept. of State Lands. This bill did not pass. A fourth bill, **HB 2796**, would have allowed development on “degraded” wetlands. The League opposed the bill but recommended that the

Governor see if there are ways to help the development proposal in Sheridan provide affordable housing for the Fox River employees. The bill did not pass.

The League provided testimony to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in opposition to proposed changes to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) that would allow the EPA to override a local state decision on this portion of the CWA.

## **2020** *(Revised June 2024, Peggy Lynch)*

The legislature heard testimony on the need for water user permittees to measure their water use via HB 4069. The League supported the bill but it did not leave the House Water Committee.

The League supported HB 4071 that would have addressed harmful algal blooms. We were hoping for the purchase of equipment to better analyze water samples for cyanotoxins. The bill died in Ways and Means.

The League has a member serving on the Oregon Health Authority Drinking Water Advisory Committee.

A League member attended the annual meeting of the Northwest Energy Coalition (NWECC) discussing both energy issues and water/salmon related to the Columbia River basin. The League signed a letter to the Governors of Oregon, Washington, Montana and Idaho to prioritize a solution to the issues around the Lower Snake River and decline of salmon populations. The League was honored as a founding member of the NWECC and recognized longtime League member and first Chair of NWECC Norma Jean Germond.

The League is participating in rulemaking on HB 2085 (2019), the dam safety bill that the League supported.

The League is participating in rulemaking on HB 2436 (2019), a bill that would allow the Dept. of State Lands partially “assume” the responsibilities of the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers for some portion of the removal/fill permit requests.

The League provided [testimony \(see pages 5-7\)](#) to the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources to address the proposed cuts to budgets of natural resource agencies. Some changes were made before the budget rebalance done in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Special Session on Aug. 10.

## **2021** *(Revised 2021, Peggy Lynch)*

The Speaker of the House created a new Water Committee for the 2021 session. The League provided testimony in support of **HB 2142**, increasing water fees for WRD, **HB 2018**, related to groundwater, **HB 3105**, in support for the 4 place-based planning efforts, **HB 2143**, related to hydroelectric permitting fees and **HB 3293**, requiring local community engagement plans. Many of the bills passed with amendments or were funded under **HB 5006** at end of session.

We expressed concern or opposition to **HB 2241** allowing private contractors to process DEQ

water quality permits and **HB 2657** a bill that would require a 60-day permit processing.

The League continues to follow work on addressing harmful algal blooms. The January Emergency Board provided some staffing and equipment and the March rebalance bill, **HB 5042** provided additional funding; however, **HB 3093** did not pass that would have increased multiple agency work between DEQ and OHA.

**HB 2218A** directed the Oregon Business Development Dept. (OBBD) to study the impact of laws related to wetlands and economic activity; however, although the bill did not pass, we expect OBBD to consider this issue.

The League was proud to support **HB 3090** again to fund the on-site septic loan program. Besides the \$2 million allocated to this bill, an additional \$15 million was allocated in **HB 5006** from federal monies to DEQ to expand this program, focusing on possible grants as well as loans for the 2020 wildfire victims.

The League supported **HB 2145**, WRD's well construction and repair modernization bill that includes a well repair/replacement fund.

The League supported **SB 859**, a bill that would have increased the Oregon State Marine Board's Salvaged account. We are concerned by the amount of derelict and abandoned boats clogging our rivers.

The League provided testimony in support of a staffer to continue work on the 100- year water vision in the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) budget, **HB 5037**.

The League continues to have a member serving on the OHA Drinking Water Advisory Committee.

The League provided testimony in support of **SB 5545**, the budget bill for the Water Resources Dept. (WRD) With glee, **HB 5006**, the end of session budget bill provided a total of \$538 million in increased staffing, programs and projects for multiple agencies to address water quality and quantity in Oregon. Included in **HB 5006** was a Budget Note for WRD to contract with Oregon Consensus to convene a workgroup to consider regional water management opportunities that build on the 100-year water vision and the Integrated Water Resources Strategy. The League will follow this process.

The League participated in a Work Group at the Dept. of State Lands related to whether or not Oregon should take over (assume) some of the duties of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Environmental Protection Agency had not completed a rulemaking that would address “partial assumption” and this concept seems to have died. The League did provide testimony in opposition to **HB 2246**, yet another attack on wetlands.

The League provided testimony regarding a new Memorandum of Understanding between ODF and DEQ. The MOU was adopted by the ODF Board and DEQ Commission.

HB 2386 creates the Oregon Independent Science Review Board within the Institute for Natural Resources at Oregon State University. The League provided [testimony](#) in support. The bill passed the committee but died in Ways and Means.

2022

The League engaged in discussions around the illegal cannabis grows, especially in Southern Oregon, where growers are not getting water rights and are stealing water and contaminating water sources in the area. We were pleased to see pass.

**SB 1602** (2020 Special Session) updated the electronic notification system from the Dept. of Forestry related to aerial spray, but it also is required to protect water intakes. The League is following this work to assure Oregonians know about this important new opportunity to protect their drinking water.

The League has a member appointed to the **HB 5006 (2021)** Work Group and will be engaging in discussions around regional water planning. We have been supportive the place-based planning and this effort should enhance that work.

The League commented on the new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Dept. of Forestry and Dept. of Environmental Quality related to water quality.

The League provided testimony to the State Land Board in support of a proposed Legislative Concept for 2023 to increase fees for the removal/fill program.

During session, we opposed **HB 4148**, a bill that could have allowed persons to go around our removal/fill program and gain “credits” for voluntary restoration of salmonid habitat.

The League is following the monies provided to the Dept. of Water Resources to assure that staffing is hired and programs are implemented from the incredible 2021 budget largess. We will be engaged in the 2023 budget development for WRD and DEQ.

The League supported **SB 1534**, a bill that the Oregon Global Warming Commission supported to create a voluntary carbon sequestration that includes natural and working lands and waters. The bill did not pass but we will work on this concept for 2023.

The League provided testimony in support of the Smith River National Recreation Expansion Act in Congress. The bill did not pass.

2023 (rev. Oct. 2023, Peggy Lynch)

The League provided [testimony](#) in support with comments on the Oregon Water Resources Dept. (OWRD) budget ([HB 5043](#)).

A major water bill, [HB 3124](#), a \$250 million Drought Relief and Water Scarcity pkg., was introduced and included some of the other bills we’ve seen this session. The League provided [comments](#) on the bill, including a list of our priorities, using our participation in the HB 5006 Work Group as our guide. The W&M Natural Resources Subcommittee used [HB 2010](#) for the water package instead of [HB 3124](#), the bill to which LWVOR provided [comments](#). The [-6 amendment](#) was adopted and includes elements of [HB 3163](#) would have created a special Fund for these regional planning efforts. The League [testified](#) in support of the Fund. [HB 3100](#), a bill that updates requirements for the Integrated Water Resources Strategy (IWRS) was included. See Sections 10 and 11 of [HB 2010](#). LWVOR [testified](#) on the original bill. The League provided [testimony](#) in support of [HB 2813](#), the Safe Drinking Water bill that directed OWEB to provide grants to protect drinking water sources. See Sections 1-4 of [HB 2010](#).

The League also provided [testimony](#) in support of [HB 3125](#) to create a new Ratepayer Fund to help low income people pay for sewer and water bills. A study of this issue was funded in the Christmas Tree bill.

The League has been a voice for the safety of domestic wells and provided [testimony](#) in support of [HB 3207](#), a bill that would have required reporting to DEQ the results of

well water tests during a real estate transaction. The bill did not pass out of Ways and Means.

[HB 3208](#) that expands the Environmental Quality Commission's authority to annually adjust additional water quality fees up to 3% per year passed.

The League has participated in a rules advisory committee related to 3% fees for other water quality permits and participated again this year.

[SB 1013](#) is a bill that would have required counties to allow rv's to be sited on certain rural properties. The bill was amended to "allow" and not "require" counties to provide this use. The bill passed and was signed by the Governor. Also, DEQ received monies to help assure that the sewer issue was addressed. The bill takes effect Jan. 1, 2024.

The League provided [testimony](#) with concerns about [SB 835](#), a bill that would have required that a single septic system be used for both the main home and an accessory dwelling unit placed on a lot where a septic system is used. The bill was amended addressing our concerns, was passed and signed by the Governor, also effective Jan. 1, 2024.

[HB 2238](#) allows for rulemaking to increase fees related to removal or fill permit applications, wetland delineation reports and general authorizations. We will work with the agency to increase processes for clearly identifying wetlands in urban growth boundaries to be sure lands that should be developed can be and those that can't should be removed from the buildable lands inventory. We [support](#) the bill which passed and was signed by the Governor with an effective date of Sept. 24, 2023. In August the League discovered that the issue of wetlands was being discussed in the Land Availability Work Group of the Governor's Housing Production Advisory Council (HPAC). We expressed concern that no wetlands expertise had been consulted during the initial round of meetings and League will be monitoring this Work Group as it considers providing unvetted proposals to the Governor. We provided [testimony](#) in opposition to the HPAC proposal.

[HB 2914](#) establishes the Oregon Abandoned and Derelict Vessel Program in DSL. The League has consistently supported funding for this program outside of the Common School Fund. Funding for this program was included in the end-of-session bill, [SB 5506](#).

The League provided [testimony](#) in support of the DSL budget ([HB 5037](#)), as did League member Christine [Moffitt](#) on behalf of the Friends of South Slough.

A League member participated in the 2023 Water Quality Fee Rules Advisory Committee (RAC) as in past years to provide a "public" voice to the RAC. Here is the

[WQ Fee RAC Meeting Summary link - May 5, 2023](#). The EQC delegated authority to approve this rulemaking for 2023 to DEQ Director Feld on May 19.

The Supreme Court on May 25, 2023, ruled in the Sackett case to amend the Waters of the U. S. (WOTUS) rules to reduce the federal protections on certain wetlands requiring the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers to reduce the permitting authority.

Oregon still has those protections for Oregon's wetlands under our Removal/Fill laws.

[HB 3409](#) (Sections 82 and 83 of the climate package) included [HB 2647 A](#) which the League supported. [HB 2647 A](#) continues to address harmful algal blooms., a public health issue.

LWVOR has a statutory seat on DWAC, a division of the Oregon Health Authority.

The League did not provide written testimony on the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) budget, but engaged during budget development and behind the scenes with legislators.

2024 (rev. June 2024, Peggy Lynch)

The League participated in a DEQ rules advisory committee related to 3% fees for other water quality permits and participated again this year. The fees now include permits for on-site septic systems and other water-related fees.

The Oregon Water Resources Dept. is considering amending rules related to groundwater allocation, requiring that groundwater is available and "stable" before approving new permits. The League provided testimony in support. On Sept. 12, 2024, they adopted new groundwater allocation rules.

The League continues to follow the Lower Umatilla Basin Groundwater Management Area and the crisis experienced by low-income Oregonians whose wells are contaminated with excessive nitrates.

The Dept. of State Lands is creating a new statewide program: Abandoned and Derelict Vessels. They partner with the Oregon Marine Board. After funding approved by the legislature, rulemaking is occurring to develop specific criteria to administer this program. The intent is to protect Oregon's waters and waterways. The League has long supported this work and is pleased to see a specific program has been created.

LWVOR has a statutory seat on the Drinking Water Advisory Committee (DWAC), a division of the Oregon Health Authority and a member was again appointed to serve on DWAC.

The League supported additional funding for the Water Well Abandonment, Repair and Replacement Fund. The League was engaged in creating the fund in 2021. \$1 million was awarded by the legislature.

The League served on two rules advisory committees for the Water Resources Dept.: Place-Based Planning and Best Practices in Community Engagement. Both rules were eventually adopted by the Oregon Water Resources Commission.

The League also served on a rules advisory committee to implement HB 2238 (2023) legislation that will increase permit fees and a rules advisory committee to address sewer availability and accessory dwelling unit issues prompted by 2021 and 2023 legislation which the League supported.

2025 (rev. Sept. 2025, Peggy Lynch)

The League has participated in a DEQ rules advisory committee related to 3% fees for other water quality permits and participated again this year.

The League was invited to participate in conversations around a new Water Stewardship and Supply Initiative. Many of the water bills this session arose from that conversation. Unfortunately, many of these bills started out as “study” bills and the actual final text of the bills were not revealed until the public hearing, making it difficult for people to testify on the actual intent of the bill.

The Oregon Water Data Portal’s pilot version was released in January (<https://www.oregonwaterdata.org>). The League continues to support multi-agency data being available in one place for all who have an interest in Oregon’s waters.

The League provided [testimony](#) in support of [HB 2168](#), a bill that would continue funding for programs to provide low interest loans for on-site septic repairs, replacements and upgrades as well as continues to support the water well abandonment, repair and replacement fund as we have since the inception of each program. Although the bill did not pass, some funding was provided by the legislature for the water well program at the end of session.

The League provided [testimony](#) in support of [SB 830](#), a bill that expands the opportunity for access to these grants and loans to affordable housing projects, including larger septic systems serving low-income people living in manufactured home parks. The bill passed.

The League [opposed SB 511](#), a bill that directed the Department of State Lands, in consultation with the State Department of Fish and Wildlife, to develop a salmon credit pilot program to encourage the voluntary restoration of salmonid habitat in the Coquille and Coos watershed basins, because current programs exist to address both protection of valuable wetlands and salmonid habitat. The bill did not pass.

The League provided [testimony](#) in support of [HB 3526](#), a bill that would have provided property buyers and Dept. of Environmental Quality information on drinking water wells. The bill did not pass. However, [HB 3525](#), which we also [supported](#), did pass after numerous amendments. This bill will require landlords of a dwelling unit that has one or more exempt wells as a source of drinking water and is located in a groundwater management area (qualifying landlords) to collect and test samples of drinking water for the unit and take other actions. The bill doesn’t take effect until June 1, 2027.

The League [supported HB 3106](#) to continue funding for the Oregon Water Data Portal. The bill was [amended](#) to create a new Integrated Water Data Team which the League did not address. The bill did not pass but we understand that the Dept. of Environmental Quality will continue this work as they are fiscally able.

The League [supported HB 2808](#), a bill that will increase certain fees related to wells. The League worked with the Water Resources Dept. and others prior to the session to find compromise and address the needs of the permittees, the general public and the agency. The final bill passed. The League also [supported HB 2803](#), a bill that, as finally amended and passed, increases water permitting fees. Again, we worked with others to find compromises. The legislature also provided some additional monies to help process permits.

The League originally supported [HB 3372](#), a bill we thought was meant to address concerns regarding the exempt uses of water. However, a major [amendment](#) was dropped on the day of the public hearing that changed the bill to allow permit certain exempt ground water users to withdraw up to 3,000 gallons of water per day for watering any lawn or noncommercial or commercial garden that does not exceed one-half acre. We asked that our testimony be withdrawn and we did not engage further in this bill. The bill passed.

With permission from LWVOR, the Deschutes County League provided [testimony](#) in support of [SB 427](#), a bill that would have prohibited certain proposed changes related to the appropriation or use of water that will result in the diminishment of streamflow. Although the bill did not pass, the Governor provided an alternative, [SB 1153](#), directing the Water Resources Department to consider whether certain water right transfers will result in a loss of in-stream habitat for sensitive, threatened or endangered aquatic species in stream reaches not protected by an existing water right or contribute to water quality impairment in water quality limited streams. Work groups met all session to find a compromise but neither bill passed.

The League engaged in the update of the [Integrated Water Resources Strategy](#) over the last two years. After the League and others objected to a draft of the Strategy, it was pulled and rewritten. A final version was adopted by the Oregon Water Resources Commission on Sept. 11, 2025, which the League can support.

The League continues to have representation on the Oregon Health Authority Drinking Water Advisory Committee. The League served on a rules advisory committee to address sewer availability, especially linked to accessory dwelling units, in part because we worked on SB 391 (2021).

# Water Resources of the Columbia River and the Columbia

# River Task Force

Adopted 1979

- A. In order to meet the present and future water needs within the Columbia River Basin, the League of Women Voters believes comprehensive planning on a basin- wide basis for conservation, development, and management of the water is essential to the optimum utilization of our water resources. Machinery is needed which will:**
- 1. Provide coordinated planning and administration among federal, state, and other agencies;**
  - 2. Establish a process for resolving conflicts among uses;**
  - 3. Establish procedures which provide information and an opportunity for citizen participation in policy decisions affecting the directions which water resources development will take.**
- B. The federal government has a necessary role in financing water resources development, but state and local governments and private users should share such costs, as far as possible, based on benefits received and the ability to pay.**

**C. The League of Women Voters believes that wise planning for the use of water in the Columbia River Basin requires an inventory of the water resource within the Basin.**

**1. This inventory should include all water-related information including:**

- a. ground and surface water sources,**
- b. viable water rights,**
- c. current use, and**
- d. projected future needs.**

**14. The inventory should be readily available to concerned agencies and the general public.**

**D. The League also believes that minimum stream flows should be established as a public right and maintained on all streams in the Columbia River Basin.**

## Position History and Implementation - Water Resources of the Columbia River

1979

The LWVOR Convention adopted a proposal asking Washington, Idaho, and Montana to join in a task force that would act as a functioning organization to identify areas of agreement on the use of the Columbia River. Using LWVUS positions, the task force was able to develop a statement of position on which the four Leagues concurred.

1983

The Columbia River Basin Task Force has met once a year and included all four states until Montana dropped out this year. Each state League provides funds for its two Task Force members to attend the two-day meetings. Officers for the task force are a Chair and a treasurer who serve two-year terms, with no state allowed to fill the Chair for two consecutive terms. The position printed above was adopted by all of the member Leagues and a standard procedure for action used by all of the state boards was also adopted.

Areas of League concern within the Columbia River Basin formulated at the first two meetings of the Task Force are:

- Lack of a basin-wide management plan;

- Lack of administrative machinery to make comprehensive, coordinated decisions and to resolve conflicts between the states;
- Incomplete adjudication of water rights and over appropriation;
- Conflicts between water users;
- Prioritization of water uses;
- Water quantity and quality;
- Lack of information between League members and the general public.

The task force has testified on provisions of the Northwest Power Planning Council's Power Plan and Fish and Wildlife Program and is monitoring their implementation. It also is concerned with groundwater depletion and pollution and drought management. It prepared a brochure on the Columbia River Basin to provide for member education.

1985

Testimony given on the U.S. Department of Energy's draft Environmental Assessment on the proposed commercial high-level waste repository at Hanford reflected League's concerns on the uncertainty of groundwater flow through the basalt rock and on transportation of wastes. League stressed the importance of the necessity of thorough studies.

1986

Leagues both of Oregon and Washington testified before the U.S. Department of Energy on the draft Environmental Impact Statement on the disposal of high-level military wastes stored at Hanford. At its fall 1986 meeting in Coeur d'Alene, the Columbia River Task Force agreed to plan a regional workshop-conference to update League leaders on Hanford issues.

1985-87

Top priority issues addressed by the Columbia River Task Force included:

- Urging the Northwest Power Council not to weaken its model conservation standards which they did somewhat;
- Lobbying Congress to pass meaningful legislation creating the Columbia River Gorge Scenic Area, which Congress did;
- Testifying for the U.S. Department of Energy's proposals for the disposal of rad active waste at Hanford.

1989

Established new structure for regional cooperation. Three state presidents will meet annually at LWVUS national convention and council (June in Washington, D.C.) to discuss regional issues.

1991

State presidents met at June 1991 LWVUS Council in Washington, D.C.

1999

Direction was given to League Board of Directors at the 1999 Convention to use this position proactively to respond to Pacific Northwest energy policies.

2001

In July LWVOR met with LWVWA in Olympia at their request to consider natural resource issue in common. Gorge issues (land use, air quality, water quality & quantity), energy, salmon, Hanford nuclear waste, global warming) were discussed. The intent is to create better communication between WA and OR – and possibly ID and MT which are also within the Columbia River System. This was a first step toward a goal of integrating such northwest issues within the state League structures.

2007

Under threat of the Governor's veto, **HB 3525**, which passed the House, died in Ways and Means. The League opposed this very contentious bill that would have reversed the existing prohibition for issuing new water rights from the mainstream of the Columbia River during the growing season in order to protect threatened and endangered fish. The Water Resources Dept. (WRD) would have been required to issue (without the usual public review) new water rights for withdrawal of 500,000 acre feet per year.

2009

The Water Resources Investment Act, **HB 3369**, creates a number of funding systems for water resource projects (see also 2009 **SB 5505, 5534 & 5535**) while also setting criteria to protect the public's interest in Oregon's water. Monies were specifically set aside for the Umatilla Basin's work on aquifer recovery and storage while protecting in stream flows for fish.

This was unlike **HB 2406**, which was opposed by the League and did not pass, that have allowed permanent annual withdrawal of up to 132,000 acre-feet from the Columbia River.

2011

**HB 3509** was yet another bill to allow withdrawals of water from the Columbia River outside currently allowed periods. The League again opposed, but we continue to monitor the work in the Umatilla Basin on aquifer storage and recharge. We are impressed by the collaboration among the various groups (including the tribes) and the creation of the new Umatilla Basin Water Commission.

2012

The League opposed **HB 4101** that directed the Water Resources Department to “aggressively pursue development of Columbia River Basin water resources.” Although HB 4101 did not pass, the Governor has stated he will work with the Water Resources Department and others to determine if winter water in the Columbia River can be allocated for agriculture.

2013

The League supported **HB 3491** that directed the Governor to keep the legislature informed about the status of the Columbia River Treaty Review. Although it did not pass, the Governor agreed to do so and updates have been provided since session. The League has provided ongoing testimony to the Review Team to modernize the Treaty to be more flexible and adaptable to be able to respond to climate change by creating a “body” authorized to take action as needed, to include “ecosystem function” as part of the Treaty, to equitably balance the needs of the U.S. and Canada while respecting the needs of the overall basin and ecosystem needs.

We opposed **SB 846** that would have broken the Columbia River Umatilla Solutions Team’s agreement signed in February of 2013. It died in committee (see SB 839 Water Storage that did pass).

2013

The League provided a series of comments on the Columbia River Treaty Review, including centering on the need to anticipate global climate change, to recognize the inherent value of water as a resource and the societal and environmental benefit water policy has for all, and to plan, manage and administer the water resources in an open and coordinated fashion. We supported developing a flexible and adaptable Treaty with the inclusion of an “ecosystem-based function”, an equitable sharing of benefits and the need for joint U.S. and Canada management after a new Treaty ratification.

2016

The League continues to work with partners and our WA and ID Leagues to encourage the U.S. State Dept. to update the Columbia River Treaty to add ecosystem management as part of that treaty.

2018

The League continues to follow the update of the Columbia River Treaty, working with partners in Oregon and the Governor's office and our Leagues in WA & ID to assure the addition of "ecosystem services" is added to the treaty and addressing the issue of flooding and protection of downstream cities such as Portland. The U.S. Dept. of State has announced formal negotiations with Canada on this treaty.

2020

The League followed work on the Columbia River Treaty between the U.S. and Canada and listened to town halls.

2022 *(Rev. 2021, Peggy Lynch)*

The League continues to follow the update on the Columbia River Treaty. Little public action has occurred, but the eleventh round of negotiations happened in December of 2021.

2023 *(Rev. Oct. 2023, Peggy Lynch)*

The League continues to follow the potential resolution/update of the Columbia River Treaty.

2025 *(Rev. Sept. 2025 Peggy Lynch)*

The League signed on to a joint letter expressing concern about the amended Columbia River Treaty. After the new federal administration took over, the Treaty amendments were abandoned. Unless other action is taken, the current 61-year-old Treaty will be reinstated.

# Social Policy

## Adult Corrections

Adopted August 1983

**The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that a full range of correctional programs should exist for adult offenders.**

**A. The League strongly favors increased use of alternatives to incarceration where possible.**

1. **The League supports alternatives at all stages of the criminal justice process, including but not limited to:**
  - a. pre-trial diversions,**
  - b. employment and educational programs,**
  - c. restitution,**
  - d. treatment centers for mental illness and substance abuse.**
15. **The League strongly supports community-based programs such as those offered through the Community Corrections Act, especially those which allow inmates to be partially or wholly self-supporting.**

**E. If more facilities are needed, the League favors:**

1. **Minimum security regional treatment and/or program focused facilities.**
2. **Adequate staffing and program must be part of any facility within the corrections system. Prison programs should provide each inmate with:**
  - a. educational and vocational training,**
  - b. opportunities for meaningful work, and**
  - c. adequate medical and mental health care.**
16. **Maximum security prisons are needed for violent criminals judged dangerous to society.**

**F. The League believes that comprehensive transitional programs are essential for successful completion of rehabilitation for each inmate released or paroled from a correctional facility.**

**G. The League supports the adoption of sentencing guidelines that set parameters for judges throughout the state in order to reduce disparity in sentencing.**

1. **Judges should be responsible for determining the length of sentences.**
2. **The League supports continuation of the Parole Board.**

## Position Implementation - Adult Corrections

1988

League opposed Ballot Measure 4, which would require full sentences with parole/probation for certain repeat felonies.

1989

Sentencing Guidelines -- The League supported **SB 632** -- the changes proposed by the Criminal Justice Council passed.

1999

LWVOR opposed Ballot Measure 74 because it was a constitutional amendment. The measure required terms of imprisonment announced in court to be fully served, with exceptions. Measure passed.

2003

During testimony for the Department of Corrections Budget, the League supported earned time credits and transitional leave as methods to reduce the prison population. LWVOR supported prison programs for education as well as alcohol/drug counseling and community treatment programs. Dollars for community supervision and treatment were greatly reduced.

2005

LWV testified on the Department of Corrections (DOC) budget, **HB 5016**, and supported limited construction of prison beds and requested alternatives to incarceration. The LWV suggested a review of mandatory sentencing statutes, which caused a doubling of the prison population. LWV supported alternatives for mentally disabled offenders, treatment beds for alcohol and drug addicts, Community Corrections programs at the county level, and prevention and treatment programs for juvenile offenders.

The final DOC budget (**HB 5156**) and Capital Construction budget (**HB 5157**) passed with the authorization for construction of the Madras facility (2000 beds) but delay of operation until the next biennium. The 400 bed Lakeview facility will open and DOC will rent beds from regional jails as needed at the rate of \$60 a day. About 13,000 inmates currently reside in 12 prisons, and a population of 14,000 is forecasted for 2007 with an insufficient number of beds in 13 prisons.

The County Community Corrections programs were funded at a higher level so they would not opt out and turnover county programs to the state. Some alcohol and drug treatment programs and women in the community funds were restored at the end.

2007

LWVOR again testified on the Department of Corrections (DOC) Budget supporting restoration of education, counseling and alcohol and drug treatment programs in the prisons. The Madras facility opening will take the pressure off prison construction, although DOC will plan for a new facility in Junction City for 2012. The Department of Human Services will plan a mental health facility on the same site, and the agencies were directed to coordinate and report back on the development of the plans. LWVOR also supported restored funding for Community Corrections programs at the county level for jails and adult probation and parole.

The Oregon Criminal Justice Commission submitted a 61-page Report to the Legislature January 2007 which included a study, "Incarceration, costs, and crime" on the costs and benefits of our current criminal justice system. The evaluators calculated the cost effectiveness of incarceration as a way to lower the crime rate. They found it was most cost-effective to incarcerate violent offenders, broke even for property criminals and did not pay to incarcerate drug offenders. Oregon prisons house only 10% drug offenders.

The Adult Sentencing Task Force within OCJC considered incorporating risk assessment into the sentencing guidelines, with the goal of shifting from punishment to reducing future crime. LWVOR also supported the budget and work of this agency.

2009

Measure 57, proposed by the 2007 Legislature, was passed by the voters and was anticipated to increase prison sentences and consequent demands on the prison system. **HB 3508** was proposed to phase in M 57, modified crimes and sentences, modified community corrections supervision, and set savings on parole hearings in order to live within the budget deficit for the 2009 session. The League participated in the Promise of 57 Coalition and supported these modifications. **HB 5053** also reduced the budgets for the Department of Corrections (DOC) Operations of Prisons and Oregon State Police and increased the budget for Oregon Youth Authority and DOC Community Corrections in order to balance the demands on the criminal justice system. Read Legislative Reports for further details.

2010

District Attorneys and Crime Victims United objected to additional hearings required by **HB 3508** and the expanded earned time. In response, **SB 1007** passed, which included other crimes not eligible for expanded earned time and suspended the hearings. The Secretary of State's Office will conduct an audit of the expanded earned time cases and report back to the 2011 legislature. The League supported the earned time expansion and anticipates the results of the audit report.

2011

The Department of Corrections Budget, **SB 5505** was one of the last votes in the last days of the session. Budget cuts of \$28 million were undesignated and sentencing changes were not approved. Prisons will be strained with the current 14,000 population and crowding of prisoners in current space. The League testified on the DOC Budget with comments supporting modification of sentences, alternative incarceration programs and transitional programs.

M 73 jail sentences for DUI were passed with time to be served in local facilities reimbursed by the state. Parole and probation violations were also to be served in local facilities with a 60-day limit. **HB 2482** asked County Sheriffs' to consider shared housing units for special populations. Transition services for prisoners returning to the community were funded within the prisons and within Community Corrections, in order to reduce recidivism. Drug Courts will continue to provide an alternative to incarceration.

The Criminal Justice Commission Budget, **SB 5507**, was supported by the League. CJC collects data from police agencies and courts, analyzes policy and trends, and administers the drug court grants to district courts. In March 2011, CJC released an analysis of Measure 11, which concluded that the prosecutor made the decisions on the sentence with the resulting increase in the severity of the sentence and increase in incarceration.

2013

**HB 3194** revisions in sentencing are expected to reduce the prison population over the next biennium. The Operations Budget for the state correctional institutions was reduced and the budget for Community Corrections in the counties will be increased.

**HB 3194** included grants to counties for local supervision, sanctions, and programs as incentives to reduce prison commitments. The League supported the Community Corrections programs and the Drug Court treatment programs.

The Criminal Justice Commission will manage the county grant implementation and keep outcome data. The Legislature has appointed a Work Group to monitor the implementation.

2015

The Department of Corrections prison population has continued to increase, and prison operations have demanded more funds for security staff and medical costs. Justice Reinvestment Funds of \$40 million were granted to counties for Community Corrections programs to divert prison commitments. The League supported the diversion of parents from prison and the prison program for parents. Local Leagues should be monitoring the county community corrections services in their areas.

2017

The Department of Corrections presentation of the Budget in **HB 5004** reviewed the prison population numbers for both men's and women's prisons with the goal of no new construction. **HB 3078**, containing options for prison reductions, passed near the end of session with support of LWVOR and other advocates. The Criminal Justice Commission Budget in **HB 5005** will continue to fund Community Correction grants for drug courts, housing, and diversion services to reduce recidivism. The CJC was given tasks for additional studies in **SB 713 & 767**. The League has supported the CJC data and research role.

2018

The short session made few changes in the Department of Corrections Budget. Due to revenue restrictions there were no construction projects, only maintenance projects. The women's prison population has ceased to grow, and the men's prisons have space to manage the increased populations. Community Corrections grants have helped county parole and probation to provide services and sanctions within the local systems.

2019

The League supported the **Department of Corrections Budget SB 5504** again this year. Deferred maintenance continues to be a problem in older facilities, and medical costs for staff and medications continue to be a drain on operational budgets. The **Community Corrections Divisions** was boosted by **Justice Reinvestment Project** funds last session but the funds were decreased this session by LFO recalculations. The county community corrections managers have objected to these cuts and resultant layoff of staff and will appeal to legislators for an increase in funding in the Short Session.

The League has been supportive of the **Criminal Justice Commission Budget** and its programs to reduce recidivism and commitments. The League supported **SB 973** for substance abuse and mental health services and **HB 3064** for Criminal Justice Reinvestments. The League submitted testimony and worked with partners.

2021 (rev. 2021, Karen Nibler)

The **Department of Corrections** has faced difficult operations during the pandemic and started early release possibilities for adults in custody. The need for medical staff and electronic medical records was emphasized.

The **State Board of Probation and Post-Prison Supervision** received new directions in **SB 620** to deliver the conditions of probation upon release of the offender from jail or prison as proposed by the Transforming Justice Coalition.

2023 (rev. Oct. 2023, Marge Easley)

Several bills to improve the lives and recidivism rates of those housed in Oregon's correctional facilities passed this session, including the provision of a wide array of drug treatment programs, a requirement to maintain a publicly accessible database on the use of segregated housing, and an authorization for the Department of Correction to enter into agreements to offer higher education academic programs to adults in custody. A bill to allow incarcerated people to vote again failed to pass, but advocacy efforts will continue.

2024

In 2020, the public voted for Ballot Measure 110, which decriminalized most unlawful possession of controlled substance offenses. Soon after, fentanyl hit communities throughout Oregon, increasing numbers of people became homeless, and mental health facilities had too few behavioral health workers to meet the increasing demands. These were some of the reasons why the public became increasingly aware of and upset about public use of controlled substances. If the legislature had not taken action, the public would be voting on an initiative which would have made it a Class A misdemeanor to possess most controlled substances. [HB4002 A](#), the "Oregon Drug Intervention Plan" was signed by the Governor and took effect April 1<sup>st</sup>. This version is very similar to [HB4002-24](#), for which the League wrote testimony. The League supported this bill because of its provisions for deflection programs, timely expungement of records, and the emphasis on public health. If someone does not enter a deflection program, the bill created an unclassified misdemeanor charge for possession, which is less severe than a Class A charge and carries no fees. Here is a flow chart which describes the provisions.

The Governor also signed [HB 5204A](#) which provides \$4M to train behavioral health workers. The League provided [testimony](#) for this provision.

# Child Care

Adopted March 1989; updated position February 2025

The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that child care is a social and economic issue that reaches beyond the family into the community. Quality child care needs to be available, accessible and affordable to all families for children of all ages and with differing needs.

The League of Women Voters supports a diverse child care system to accommodate different parental choices and needs. Such a system may include day care centers, group homes, and family day care homes.

The State of Oregon should establish appropriate standards to ensure that high quality care exists in all settings. For centers and group homes: these standards should address facilities, staff qualifications, and number of children served. Program, parent/care giver communication, administration and transportation should be included for centers and may also be considered for group homes.

The State of Oregon should enforce mandatory regulations by funding a sufficient number of inspectors.

The State of Oregon should set requirements for adequate training for care givers and ensure those training opportunities are available. This could include state provision of training and/or state incentives for others to provide training.

City and county governments should participate in enforcing health and fire standards.

- Affordable child care should be available and accessible for children with differing needs and in various age groups.
- While parents have the primary responsibility for choosing child care, a coordinated effort between parents and government, together with providers, employers, and private groups is necessary to deliver quality child care at an affordable price.

The State of Oregon should:

1. Provide financial assistance for child care expenses to low- and middle-income families based on need. Such assistance could include tax credits for parents with a ceiling based on income.
2. Support resource and referral programs.
3. Encourage employer involvement in the child care system.
4. Encourage development of school-age child care programs.
  - a. Parents in job training, in school, with special-needs children and/or needing respite care services should be eligible for financial assistance for child care based on demonstrated need.

Child caregivers should be awarded recognition commensurate with their responsibilities. The State of Oregon should take a leadership role in elevating the professional status of child caregivers and ensuring adequate compensation. National Position (adopted in 1988): “Support programs, services, and policies at all levels of government to expand the supply of affordable, quality child care for all who need it, in order to increase access to employment and to prevent and reduce poverty.”

#### *Updated Position 2025*

##### Administration and Organization:

- Oregon should have a coordinating organization to provide overall planning for care and enrichment for children and youth from birth through high school during non-school time.
- Oregon must periodically conduct an in-depth cost/benefit analysis of K-12 childcare programs that includes economic benefits to the economy vs. cost to taxpayers for the public and for the Legislature.
- Oregon should provide subsidized and stable funding for afterschool and summer programs that include education, enrichment, and experiential learning.
- Oregon should provide startup funds for childcare, after school, and summer programs.
- Reimbursements should be timely, consistent, and clearly defined.
- Evaluation results of programs (not individual children) should be made public.

##### Licensing:

- Oregon should provide licensing and oversight for care programs involving children and youth 0-18 yrs.
- Oregon should provide a clear, comprehensive licensing process.
- Facility requirements should be clearly defined to help providers understand and meet regulations.
- Coaching and technical assistance regarding licensing should be made available to providers.
- The licensing of providers should be handled by one state agency.

##### Curriculum:

- There should be oversight to ensure age-appropriate curricular goals are met.
- Equity, respect, and the needs of diverse cultures should be incorporated into curriculum planning to benefit all children.
- Older youth should be involved in curricular planning to help them develop independence and responsibility.
- Care programs should have curricular input from parents and guardians.
- When the latest research on curriculum and procedures is available, it should be disseminated to providers.

Staffing:

- The certification of provider staff should be in one state agency.
- Background checks should be conducted by one state agency with an emphasis on efficient and prompt responses.
- Provider staff should be compensated for the training time required.
- The training required for provider staff should be free or subsidized.
- Training for provider staff should be offered at a variety of times at accessible locations or online and be available in a variety of languages.
- The State of Oregon should provide forgivable education loans for people who work in childcare, afterschool, and summer care in underserved or high poverty areas.

## Position Implementation - Child Care

1989

League actively lobbied on child care issues, working with child care advocates to pass the following legislation:

- **SB 272** and **HB 5048** to continue and to re-fund the Oregon Commission on Child Care;
- **SB 692** to provide grants for neighborhood-based school age child care programs;
- **SB 750** to revise the child care tax credit so that lower income parents receive a greater share of the credit and to cap the credit at \$45,000 taxable income with the savings from the cap being used for funding Resource and Referral grants, for low- income student child care grants, and for changing the Employment Related Day Care program to a direct pay for provider system;
- **SB 915** to involve Small Business Development Centers in provision of business training for home day care providers;
- **SB 1080** to establish the framework for a statewide Resource and Referral network; and
- **HB 3466** to establish an Oregon Youth Services Commission through which to administer the "Great Start" programs.

In addition to giving testimony, the League utilized interested members statewide in a letter-writing campaign on these bills as well as several that did not pass.

1991

\$14 million + on federal Child Care and Development Block Grant funds are scheduled to begin arriving in Oregon in the fall of 1991. The Oregon Commission on Child Care and the Department of Human Resources worked during the spring to develop a draft plan for using those funds.

**SB 671**, which was passed during the waning days of the session, requires the office of Director of Department of Human Resources to administer the funds and outlines a proposed budget. After federal regulations are digested, a more detailed budget will be written and presented to the E-Board for approval. Many other bills, which would have established specific child care related programs and specified funding by the federal funds, died in a committee.

**SB 5524**, which appropriates money from the General Fund to the Commission for Child Care for biennial expenses and for resource and referral grants, passed easily.

**HB 2262**, which extends the sunset on dependent care assistance credit also passed easily in both Houses.

1993

The Child Care and Development Block Grant of 1991 is before the US Congress for renewal. It has been of considerable help to Oregon in the past two years. With Ballot Measure 5 budget cuts it is needed as never before. The Department of Human Resources budget has been cut due to Ballot Measure 5.

The Oregon legislature approved legislation which tightened requirements for child care facilities. Persons caring for more than 3 non-related children are required to register with the Child Care Division. Anyone caring for more than 10 children, unless exempt under the law, must be certified by the Division. All employees of child care facilities and all adults living in family child care homes are required to complete a criminal record check. Child care staff members are required to complete training for recognition of child abuse.

1995

The Oregon legislature approved a measure that allows the Child Care Division to establish a criminal record check registry for persons employed or wishing to be employed in child care facilities. The purpose of the registry is to make it easier and less costly for employees to establish a record and for employers to verify that record.

The legislature also passed a measure that makes the Child Care Division a member of county multidisciplinary child abuse teams and assures the sharing of child abuse information with the Child Care Division for the purpose of making appropriate decisions regarding child care licenses.

1999

The League joined with several other organizations to support funding for increased child care inspections and training for family child care providers. **HB 2241** and **SB 5512** authorize the Child Care Division, using temporary staff hired with federal funds, to inspect family child care businesses for compliance with minimum health and safety standards at the time they become registered.

**HB 2240** requires the Child Care Division to increase their investigations of complaints and formalizes the responsibility of identified agencies to report complaints they receive about child care to the Division. **SB 110** requires family child care providers to have first aid and food handlers training.

**SB 870** directs the Department of Education to establish statewide training programs on healthy brain development and the Child Care Division to offer scholarships to child care providers. In addition, **SB 2** passed, expanding the child care tax credit to include higher income levels.

2001

Two important things happened during the 2001 legislative session: a refundable tax credit for low-income working families and periodic on-site health and safety reviews of family child care facilities. Both of these actions build on laws passed in previous sessions. The refundable tax credit, effective in 2003, allows low-income working families to benefit from the child care tax credit legislation through the receipt of a refund. Currently, those families with insufficient income from which to deduct a credit receive no help with child care costs. The periodic on-site health and safety reviews of family child care facilities brings close to the same oversight granted child care centers.

Employers saw an extension of the Dependent Care Assistance and Referral Credit through 12/31/07. In addition, a new employers' tax credit was created for certified contributions to the Child Care Division or qualified agencies for promoting child care. Two potentially important bills died this session. **SB 795** would have provided funding for child care for children whose parents or caregivers have developmental, mental or emotional difficulties. **HB 3771**, Oregon Cares, would have provided incentives for child care staff to increase their training and to remain in the child care field by providing wage supplements and tuition reimbursements.

2007

The Department of Human Services – Self Sufficiency branch offices will be able to extend child care subsidy for one year to welfare clients who enter the job market. The DHS budget contained this benefit and health care subsidy to assist these new employees to become independent and remain off state assistance. LWVOR supported this budget addition.

2009

Child care subsidies were reduced for the departments of Employment and Human Services. However, a fund shift from the Commission on Children and Families (CCF) to the Department of Human Services (DHS) transferred child care workers' training funds to the DHS Self Sufficiency program to pay for child care for parents receiving assistance who were entering employment. This fund shift was stated to be a one-time transfer for this biennium.

2010

Employment Related Day Care received an additional budget allotment from the Ways and Means Committee at the end of the Special Session. Again this was intended to help families remain independent.

2011

Employment Related Day Care was reduced during the last quarter of the biennium, but it was considered to be essential for newly employed parents. ERDC was continued in conjunction with the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families efforts to maintain employment for parents. Additional funds were reserved for the Early Learning Council programs in the second year of the biennium.

2012

The Office of Child Care was moved from the Employment Department to the Department of Education where it will be part of the Early Learning Division aligned programs. The ELD will develop a Tiered Quality Rating model for day care facilities and options. Subsidized day care for parents leaving financial assistance programs will continue. The College student scholars program will be phased out as parents graduate.

2015

Additional Child Care slots for working parents will be provided within the Department of Human Services Self Sufficiency programs and the Earned Income Tax Credit has been increased for working parents. Quality Improvement for child care providers has become a new effort.

2018

**HB 4028** continued tax credits for low-income working parents. The Office of Child Care added more staff in their budget to monitor child care homes and businesses. Testing for lead in water and water quality was one of the issues added as a requirement to remain a state supported child care service.

2024

LWVOR wrote [testimony](#) supporting a bill which would have provided \$50 million to support summer learning through ODE to school districts. [HB4082](#), which included an appropriation of \$30 million for 2024 summer care plus additional funding for ODE administration and authorized formation of a work group to plan for future afterschool and summer programs was passed by the legislature and signed by the Governor.

2025

LWVOR supported [HB2007](#) for summer learning focused on literacy funded through the Oregon Department of Education to school districts. The accompanying funding bill [HB 5047](#) provides \$35 million for summer 2025 and \$47 million in 2026 and 27. It also moves the funds into a special summer learning grant fund in the Treasurer's office outside the general fund, thereby establishing a sustainable funding source that allows for advanced planning. The bill also included a provision for an advisory council to plan for future support of both summer and afterschool care. Specific provisions were not included for after-school care but school districts were directed to partner with community-based organizations. The bill was one of the Governor's priorities,

and she signed it during the session.

# Children at Risk

Adopted January 1995

**A. The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports comprehensive statewide, locally based programs and services for teen pregnancy prevention and for teenage parents. Such programs and services should include elements of the following:**

1. family planning services,
2. school-based health centers,
3. parenting skills' education,
4. cooperation/coordination among agencies providing services,
5. evaluation and accountability measurements,
6. easy and appropriate access to information and services,
7. mentoring and counseling for teenagers and their parents, including peer counseling,
8. community involvement and support groups,
9. abuse prevention,
10. male responsibility in teen pregnancy prevention,
11. broad public education, and 12. substance abuse prevention.

**H. The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes the state should have the primary responsibility for funding programs addressing teenage pregnancy prevention and teen parenting. Elements to be included, but not limited to, are:**

1. equitable funding of programs for young women and young men,
2. adequate funding for state agencies with responsibilities to children,
3. cooperative efforts with the private sector,
4. funds earmarked for community programs, urban and rural, which provide after school and weekend activities for teens, and
5. shared funding responsibility, when appropriate, among state, local and private sources.

**I. The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports development of required curriculums for all school districts relative to teen pregnancy and parenting, accompanied by implementation requirements, which covers, but is not limited to, the following areas:**

1. comprehensive, age-appropriate family life sexuality education K-12,
2. parenting skills education,
3. specialized education programs for pregnant teens and teenage parents, and
4. teacher training at the baccalaureate level and as continuing education.

**J. The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports programs directed to assist pregnant teens and teen parents. These programs include the following:**

- 1. job training and adequate wages,**
- 2. involvement and financial support requirements for fathers,**
- 3. counseling to break the cycles of abuse, poverty, and teen pregnancy,**
- 4. health care, including prenatal care,**
- 5. accessible, affordable housing,**
- 6. child care,**
- 7. transportation access,**
- 8. completion of secondary education, and**
- 9. self-esteem enhancement, career opportunities, and transition to self-sufficiency.**

Updated Position 2015

**In the Spring of 2015, League members throughout Oregon studied early childhood education, discussed consensus questions posed by the LWVOR study committee, and submitted their views to the state League. Those views were combined to formulate the following position, which can now be used for advocacy by local Leagues as well as the LWVOR Action Team.**

**LWVOR Children at Risk Position Statement: The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that the early years of a child's life are crucial in building the foundation for educational attainment and greatly impact success or failure in later life. Early intervention and prevention measures are effective in helping children reach their full potential. The League supports policies, programs, and funding at all levels of the community and government that promote the well-being, encourage the full development, and ensure the safety of all children. These include:**

- Nutrition and food access for vulnerable children and families**
- Access to affordable, safe, and stable housing**
- Early screening (physical, dental, mental, and behavioral) for all children; early prenatal care and ongoing health care for children (physical, mental, dental)**
- Access to affordable, quality child care (see LWVOR Child Care position) Access to early literacy and pre-school programs, including but not limited to Early Head Start and Head Start**
- Programs for mental health and addictions treatment for parents**
- Family support, including but not limited to home visiting, parenting classes, and family relief nurseries**
- Comprehensive services for children with developmental and cognitive disabilities**
- Use of evidence-based practices in child welfare and foster care**

- **Programs to reduce poverty by providing parents with assistance in job training and education Policies and legislation to reduce racial or ethnic minority status inequities**

**The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that governments, at all levels, have a responsibility to oversee and coordinate a comprehensive network of services to maximize children's readiness to be successful in school while optimizing available resources.**

**National Position, adopted 1994:**

**The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that early intervention and prevention measures are effective in helping children reach their full potential. The League supports policies and programs at all levels of the community and government that promote the wellbeing, encourage the full development and ensure the safety of all children. These include:**

- **child abuse/neglect prevention;**
- **teen pregnancy prevention;**
- **quality health care, including nutrition and prenatal care;**
- **early childhood education;**
- **developmental services, emphasizing children ages 0-3;**
- **family support services;**
- **violence prevention.**

## **Position Implementation - Children at Risk**

1991

**HB 2004** created a new Office of Children and Families that will coordinate the development and activities of county-based commissions on children and families. The focus of these commissions will be on developing local plans for preventative services for children and families and allocating resources for plan related services.

**HB 2003** designated Deschutes County as the pilot site for the first county commission. The focus of the Children's Services Division is on the protection of children. LWVOR submitted testimony expressing concern that any structure to serve children and families will only be as good as the funding provided. **SB 674** will grant tax credit to parent taxpayers who provide in-home care for qualifying youth and children.

**HB 3000** directs district school boards to instruct high school students on parental skills and child development. It applies to students who will graduate after January 1, 1995.

1999

Oregon has fallen behind the majority of other states in services for young children and their families and with this legislative session, the fall continues. A bill to expand the successful and voluntary Healthy Start Family Support Services program died. A bill to increase funding for early childhood education services for eligible children birth to three years old died. A bill to add funding to the pre-kindergarten program so that 50 percent of those eligible would be served died. A bill that would have allowed school districts to establish school breakfast programs, summer food service programs and after-school meal program never had a hearing.

The League followed several pieces of legislation related to teen parents; none made it out of committee. A program which aims at giving students the skills to resist pressure to have sex, STARS (Students Today Aren't Ready for Sex) met with funding resistance when the Health Department's budget came up for review. It is likely that this program will continue outside of the Health Department.

2003

See Mental Health Services for Children and Youth and Juvenile Justice.

2005

LWVOR and LWV of Umpqua Valley successfully supported **HB 2202**, which assigned the responsibility for planning services for Runaway and Homeless Youth and their families to the Commission on Children and Families, but no funds were allocated for additional staff or programs. Other bills that the League followed but did not testify on: **HB 3029** transferred the Juvenile Crime Prevention (JCP) funds and staff to the Oregon Commission on Children and Families; **HB 2833** allowed JCP funds to be used for early intervention work with younger children; and **SB 1012** brings the Children of Incarcerated Parents into the planning process with recommendations due in December 2006.

LWVOR successfully supported **HB 2221** that established a Child Abuse Multidisciplinary Intervention Program within the Department of Justice (DOJ). LWVOR did not support **HB 2010** that requested DOJ oversight over Child Welfare in the Department of Human Services (DHS), and the bill failed to be voted upon on the House floor.

A review of the DHS Safety Intervention System submitted to the House Human Services Subcommittee on Child Welfare made recommendations that were to be implemented by Child Welfare administrators.

DHS – Child Welfare administrators reported that the legislature did fund attorneys to assist child welfare workers in the court process during the E-board process. The league testified to support this action during the regular session.

2007

The Oregon Commission on Children and Families (OCCF) received an increase in funding for local staff but not sufficient funding to restore programs to a pre-2003 level. Children of Incarcerated Parents did not receive dedicated funding. Relief nurseries were funded for two more counties by a fund transfer from Public Safety. The Department of Human Services – Child Welfare requested additional caseworkers and paralegal assistants as recommended by the Safety Study submitted last session.

The Department of Justice received additional attorney positions to consult with DHS caseworkers, and paralegal assistants were included in the child welfare budget. The legislative committee recommended cutting support staff in order to fund additional caseworkers, and the result was no additional caseworkers.

A package of child welfare bills mandated priority for child placement with relatives and foster care payments for the relatives. The DHS budget included the additional cost of relative foster care payments but only to relatives at a low-income level.

Supporters objected to the low-income level set for relative foster care payments.

2009

The Child Welfare Division of the Department of Human Services budget was supported with the addition of caseworkers in order to provide more supervision for children in foster care. The payments for relatives providing foster care were restricted to those below 185% of the poverty level. A taskforce was appointed to look into the disproportionality of minorities in the child welfare system.

The Oregon Commission on Children and Families (OCCF), which administers prevention programs, received a 20% funding cut for staff and programs over the biennium. The Runaway and Homeless Youth Program did not receive General Funds for the coming biennium but it was assigned program funds from the federal Youth Investment grants. The budget did not provide for the expansion of relief nurseries within the state, and there was a requirement to review the efficiency of the Healthy Start program.

A budget note also required OCCF to report back to the Special Session to review its performance in the mission of the agency. The League worked with the Coalition of County Commissions for Children and Families.

2010

The Oregon Commission on Children and Families lost the federal funds infusion from the Department of Human Services. The current demands on DHS for financial assistance and food programs created a budget demand, which was partially met with the federal funds. However, the Ways and Means Committee allotted funds for 4 new Relief Nurseries and Early Head Start sites in its final Reconciliation bill.

In addition, **SB 991** proposed a voluntary respite care program, called Safe Families, through a private non-profit. The bill exempted the providers from DHS certification and supervision by DHS. No state expenditures were requested.

2011

The Oregon Commission for Children and Families will be phased out on June 30, 2012, and the Early Learning Council will assume some of the programs and responsibilities of the agency on July 1, 2012. The League testified regarding the continuation of prevention programs in the community. The Early Learning Council proposal brings all early childhood programs under one umbrella. The legislators in the February 2012 Session will be making further decisions about the transfer of current programs into the Early Learning Council. The League did not testify on the Early Learning Council proposal, but it did adopt a Restudy of Children at Risk.

The Child Welfare division of the Department of Human Services has not been fully staffed with caseworkers and assistants to supervise children in their custody. The addition of domestic violence counselors in branch offices has provided services in crisis situations. The department attempts to keep children in their own homes with safety plans or to place children with relatives or friends of the family. Additional funds were approved to support **SB 964** for family preservation and reunification.

Disproportionate minority representation in foster care continues to be an issue, and funds were set aside for future programs. Adoption Assistance payments have been lowered.

2013

The Department of Education – Early Learning Division assumed the duties of Oregon Commission on Children and Families on 7-1-2012 and passed through program funds to the local commissions for the remainder of the biennium.

The local commissions ceased to be funded on 7-1-2013, but counties retained some staff and programs. The ELD has opened a Request for Applications from regional consortiums to implement and support prevention programs for the remainder of the 2011-2013 biennium. The first hubs to be funded will be announced November 12, 2013, with the assumption that a maximum of 16 hubs will be identified in the next year. The League made comments along the evolution of **HB 2013**, supporting the concepts and encouraging funding on the local level.

The Department of Education continues to provide Early Intervention and Special Education and Head Start programs within the state. The Healthy Start home visitation program for 0-3 will be administered directly by the ELD as well as the Relief Nursery programs in the region. The Youth Development Division assumed the implementation of funding streams for children 6-20.

The YDC plans to continue to fund local programs in counties through the remainder of the biennium. The YDD funding for the second year has been retained as a special appropriation pending review in the February 2014 Session.

Juvenile Dependency court processes have been under review and a Task Force has been meeting during the Interim. The Human Service Joint Ways and Means Sub Committee requested outcome data from the Department of Human Services on the **SB 964** Family Preservation model prior to the 2014 Session. **SB 123** granted foster children a Bill of Rights. Catholic Community Charities received permission to expand local community homes outside the DHS system. Court Appointed Special Advocates is looking for a new administrative home in the next session.

## 2015

Children at Risk – In 2015 a significant investment in Early Childhood programs was made in the Department of Education Operational Budget. The Early Learning Division expanded programs for healthy start, relief nurseries, early head start, special education/intervention, literacy, and Kindergarten in all districts. The League supported the Hub formation in 17 regions in the state, which have been funded for staff and preschool programs. In 2016 The Early Learning Division received funds for additional Head Start Preschools, mixed Preschool Programs, and additional Early Intervention and Special Education Services. Local Leagues should be aware of the early childhood program in their areas. Check to see what might be available in your communities.

The Youth Development Division continued to receive Juvenile Crime Prevention funds in 2014 and 2015 which were passed to County Juvenile Departments.

The agency also provides grants for school and workforce training for youth ages 6 to 20. Workforce development up to age 26 and gang prevention programs are available for the most at risk young teens and adults, but decreased federal grant funds have resulted in providing funds for only half the requests. DHS Runaway and Homeless Youth funds were increased and an advisory committee was appointed to make recommendations on the criteria for funding.

Child Welfare data from the Department of Human Services shows fewer children in foster care, more children with relatives, fewer adoptions, and more guardianships as a result of differential response and family preservation models in 2015. DHS has received critical reports for safety from federal officials, so new licensing requirements and an advisory commission were enacted in 2016.

2017

Children at Risk was separated into Education, Child Care and Youth Development Programs for older children apart from Department of Human Services issues in Child Welfare, Self Sufficiency, food programs for families, and services for developmentally delayed children in the 2017 issues.

The League has monitored the DHS Budget and lobbied about priorities within that budget. The League also testified about separate children's issues on foster children's rights and sibling's rights for visitation. Health Care checkups will be monitored. DHS regulations on the supervision of foster placements and residential programs were a concern in 2017 and new regulations were passed.

Court Appointed Special Advocates for children in Juvenile Dependency cases has been moved from offices at Volunteer Services in Oregon Housing and Community Services to the Department of Administrative Services.

2018

The Department of Human Services has been criticized for lack of supervision in foster homes and residential placements for dependent children. DHS is reviewing policies for removing children from home and training new caseworker staff. DHS is reporting remedial efforts to the Interim Committees. The League continues to monitor the reports.

2019

The **Department of Human Services** Child Welfare managers were raked over the coals during the 2019 session due to complaints regarding residential out of state placements of teenagers with behavioral disorders.

The complaints came from teenagers, family members and defense attorneys and resulted in visits to the programs and reviews of management plans by child welfare staff. The legislature has responded with **SB 1** which added a new Advisory Council for Child Welfare and funds for specialized placements in Oregon facilities. **SB 171** also passed at the end of session to allow placements of teenagers in shelter homes or juvenile system homes on a temporary 60 day basis. The league submitted an earlier letter on the DHS agency Budget **HB 5026** which commented on Runaway and Homeless Youth and options for programs not within state custody. The 60 day time period could allow for location of family or community options for guardianships.

2021 (rev. 2021, Karen Nibler)

A new **Child Welfare Equity Advisory Committee** in **SB 4** has been established within the Oregon Health Authority and reports to the Governor. **SB 1** (2019) on child welfare placements was reviewed and further reports are due on April 4, 2022. This Committee should be monitored.

## National Position: Early Intervention for Children at Risk

2011

Using the following statement, the League supported restrictions on BpA: "The League supports policies and programs at all levels of the community and government that promote the wellbeing, encourage the full development and ensure the safety of all children."

The League supported **SB 695** that would have prohibited the sale of baby bottles and sippy cups that contain Bisphenol A. Unfortunately, this bill did not pass, but we expect it to be part of the 2012 session.

## Farmworker Issues

Adopted January 2001

**The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes all citizens benefit from the agricultural bounty produced by Oregon's farmers and farmworkers, and that the state has a role in supporting the sound and fair relationship between farmers and the agricultural workforce, with the goal of economic and social justice for both parties. LWVOR believes the state must work for the humane and respectful treatment of workers as well as the viability of Oregon farms.**

Currently laws that regulate the working environment for agricultural workers are different from laws regulating the working conditions in other industries. The LWVOR believes the differences between agriculture and other industries justify some variance; but where farm work is similar to other labor, regulatory differences should be narrowed.

- All farmworkers should be fairly compensated, earning at least minimum wage.
- With the possible exception of piece-rate work, some farm labor should be eligible for overtime pay.
- Unemployment insurance should cover permanent, year-round farmworkers.
- Hourly-paid farmworkers should receive paid rest breaks; all farmworkers should be provided adequate time away from work for meals.
- The state should continue to improve the safety of agricultural workplaces for farmworkers.
- Rules for child labor and for the use of farm and forestry labor contractors should maintain high standards of worker protections.
- State laws and programs, including non-governmental efforts, should address farmworkers' needs for a broad range of services, such as child care, safe and decent housing, sanitary working and living conditions, and access to education and health care. Education programs that are bilingual and culturally appropriate should be offered to assure that workers understand safe work practices, workplace rules, and grievance procedures.

LWVOR supports the right of Oregon farmworkers to collectively bargain. Farmworkers should have the right to hold union elections. Employer retaliation for collective activity should be prohibited. Legislation establishing fair rules for unionization by farmworkers should be developed through a dialogue between workers and employers. Monitoring of union elections and contracts by either a private commission or a state entity should be fair and under terms agreeable to both workers and employers. Mediation programs should be encouraged.

LWVOR believes consistent and adequate enforcement of state regulations is a key to better conditions for farmworkers. Currently, we find enforcement to be inadequate and inconsistent. LWVOR supports increasing enforcement staff, increasing fines and penalties for serious violations, and collection of civil penalties for infractions of laws.

LWVOR supports programs to help farmers understand and comply with worker protection rules.

LWVOR believes that safe, decent, and affordable housing should be available to all farmworkers. Oregon currently has an acute shortage of such housing for its agricultural workforce. LWVOR supports increased state funding for farmworker housing, including support, with other funds, for planning, development costs, rural infrastructure, startup costs, operating subsidies, emergency housing, and training and assistance for sponsoring organizations. The state has an important role in ensuring the safety of farmworker housing provided on farms. Such housing that has not been registered with the state should be located and brought into compliance with state standards. Public funding should emphasize best practices, such as community-based housing, and should encourage new models that are decent and safe housing alternatives for seasonal and for permanent, year round workers; these two groups may require different types of housing.

## Position Implementation - Farmworker Issues

1999

LWVOR Convention adopted a 2-year study of farmworkers in Oregon.

2001

This session there was little action on farmworkers, except in the area of housing. The 1999-2001 Farmworker Housing Interim Task Force had most of their recommendations approved, including expanding and improving the farmworker tax credit, improving land use law to aid in the siting of farmworker housing, and expressing State policy on farmworker housing. However, the Legislature failed to provide the \$5 million for housing proposed by the task force.

2013

Farmworker housing tax credits were continued early in the session.

2014

The LWVOR supported Referendum 88 that would have allowed all residents to obtain a driver's license without requiring proof of legal residence in the US. The voters rejected it.

# Gun Safety

## National Position

### Position Implementation - Gun Safety

2001

The 2001 legislative session saw little movement on the issue of gun safety. The League supports strong government regulation of individual firearm ownership. A few pieces of legislation that would promote control were introduced, few made it out of committee and none passed. One piece of legislation that received a hearing at the committee level was the "Eddie the Eagle" bill, named for the NRA sponsored gun safety program to be used in our grade schools. The League was among many organizations and citizens that provided testimony in opposition to the bill, it did not pass out of committee.

2006

The Legislature passed **HB 2853**, which allows the Oregon State Police to receive information on persons determined to be mentally ill or mentally handicapped in order to disqualify them from possessing or receiving a firearm. The bill complied with the National Instant Criminal Background Check System passed by Congress in 2007.

2014

Testimony was again submitted in support of the expansion of background checks for all gun transfers. However, the bill died in the Senate when it became clear it would fail by at least one vote.

2015

The League continued its affiliation with the Alliance under its new name, the Oregon Alliance for Gun Safety. Testimony was submitted in opposition to bills related to concealed carry reciprocity, firearms training facilities on EFU land, and mandatory

K-12 firearms safety courses. Most of the League's attention, however, was focused on the bill to expand background checks, which finally passed on a strictly partisan vote. Oregon is now one of eight states that require universal background checks at the point of sale for all transfers of all classes of firearms, including purchases from unlicensed sellers.

2016

The League supported two bills related to gun safety, although only one was successful. The “Charleston Loophole” bill (**HB 4147**) passed the House but stalled in the Senate. Named after the 2015 mass shooting at a South Carolina church, it would have closed the “default proceed” loophole that allows a buyer to take possession of a firearm after three business days without a background check. The second bill (**HB 4075**), a recommendation of the School Safety Task Force, established a statewide school safety hotline to allow anonymous tips either by phone, text, or electronic format. One million dollars was also allocated this session to strengthen enforcement of the 2015 firearm background check law.

2018

The League advocated for **HB 4145**, the bill which closed the boyfriend loophole for gun possession when personal safety was threatened. The public has been supportive of restrictions on gun ownership due to recent events. Gun legislation proposals are being considered for the next session.

2019

The only gun safety bill to pass was HB 2013, which closed a loophole in the 2018 Extreme Risk Protection Law by prohibiting possession of firearms by domestic violence offenders in cases where offenders fail to request or appear for a hearing, or a hearing request is withdrawn. Late in the session, an omnibus gun safety bill, SB 978, was sacrificed to entice Republican legislators to return from a walkout and ensure passage of the Student Success Act. Its main features included safe storage requirements, minimum age changes, regulation of “ghost guns,” reporting of lost or stolen firearms, and allowing local concealed carry restrictions in public buildings.

2020

LWVOR supported the following bills which did not pass:

- HB4005 would have required the safe storage and transfer of firearms.
- SB1538 would have expanded the ability of local governments to establish gun-free zones in public buildings by removing the exemption for carriers of concealed handgun licenses. Unfortunately, the bill did not pass.

2021 *(rev. 2021, Marge Easley)*

**SB 554** combined the concepts of safe storage and restrictions on firearms in certain public buildings, including the state capitol and PDX Airport. School district and university boards were also given the option to establish gun-free zones. Gun rights supporters filed a referendum petition to ask voters to repeal the law in 2022 but failed to collect sufficient signatures. Bills to eliminate the Charleston Loophole and ban undetectable and untraceable guns did not advance but will hopefully reappear in a future session.

2022 *(rev. 2022, Marge Easley)*

As a result of a rise in gun violence, particularly in the Portland area, the focus in 2022 was on directing state and federal funds to various community violence prevention and intervention programs.

A total of \$20 million was included in the state budget for grants to community service providers, for hospital-based intervention programs, and a training and certification program for violence prevention professionals.

2023 (rev. Oct. 2023, Marge Easley)

Oregon became one of 11 states to regulate unserialized firearms (ghost guns). Failing to pass were bills to place an age restriction of 21 on gun purchases, an expansion of the number of jurisdictions that could establish gun free zones, and implementation details for **Measure 114** (2022). The fate of Measure 114, which requires a permit to purchase a firearm and places a ban on high-capacity magazines, remains undetermined as it makes its way through state and federal appeals courts.

2024

**SB 1503 B-Engrossed**, which was strongly supported by the League, was signed into law by the Governor. The bill, establishes a Task Force on Community Safety and Firearm Suicide Prevention. The task force consists of 17 members, including legislators and representatives from state agencies, behavioral and public healthcare groups, and communities most impacted by suicide. The bill includes an allocation of \$250,000 to the Oregon Department of Justice to support the task force and provide funding for outside research.

**HB 4156 B**, which strengthens and modernizes Oregon's anti-stalking law, was signed into law by the Governor, and will go into effect July 1<sup>st</sup>. It includes much-needed provisions for the crimes of cyberstalking and internet harassment.

2024

Although supporters started the session with high hopes for passage of several important gun safety bills, nearly all were traded away. The defeat of a bill to establish a statewide gun dealer licensing program was a major disappointment, but it will hopefully reappear in an upcoming session.

The only bill to pass was a watered-down omnibus bill that bans rapid-fire devices and gives cities and counties the authority to pass ordinances that prohibit firearms in public buildings, even those owned by holders of concealed carry licenses. A last-minute addition to the bill set an implementation date in 2026 for Measure 114, dependent on a favorable decision on its constitutionality by the Oregon Supreme Court, expected later this year. The measure, which requires a permit to purchase a firearm and bans high-capacity magazines, has been held up in the courts since its passage in 2022. At session's end the Oregon State Police was allocated over \$14 million for Criminal Justice Information Services and other associated costs related to Measure 114.

## Immigration

### National Position

Promote reunification of immediate families; meet the economic, business, and employment needs of the United States; be responsive to those facing political persecution or humanitarian

crises; and provide for student visas. Ensure fair treatment under the law for all persons. In transition to a reformed system, support provisions for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status.

## LWVOR and LWVUS 2020 Adopted Convention Resolution

Be it resolved the League of Women Voters reaffirms our commitment to Immigration reform: laws that provide efficient, expeditious systems for immigrants to enter the United States. The League stands in solidarity with immigrants and our partners in the immigrant rights community. Congress must take immediate action to pass common sense, fair immigration policies that end the crisis at our borders, end the separation of families, ensure their health and safety, and provide a clear path to citizenship which includes the DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) young people.

## Position Implementation – Immigration

2020 (rev. 2025, Claudia Keith)

[In 2020 LWVOR passed at Council an Immigration Resolution](#) and presented a [Immigration Caucus](#) at LWVUS 2020 convention, '[Climate Migration, Immigration and Human Rights: What You Need to Know!](#)' In 2019 [LWV was very clear concerning asylum seekers.](#)" ... "Seeking asylum is not a crime. Refugees from Central America are fleeing dangerous conditions in their home countries, risking everything to survive. They must be greeted with dignity and respect..."

Just this week [Oregon Lawmakers are](#) working with immigration nonprofits to welcome hundreds of Afghan refugees.

Nationally courts are [beginning to admit that some immigration laws are racist.](#) "...The Aug. 3 ruling by Judge Simon in the District of Oregon also acknowledged that history, and suggested Congress should explicitly repudiate the racism underlying immigration laws..."

Two of the three LWVOR priority Immigration/Refugee related bills have passed and signed by the governor or are now funded.

[SB 778](#) Enrolled Office of Immigrant and Refugee Advancement: '[Oregon lawmakers approve creation of new office to support immigrants and refugees.](#)' will advocate for Oregon's newest residents, seek to connect people to resources and programs helping to reduce social, economic and health disparities. (Fiscal \$1.4M w/ 3.8 FTE) [League Testimony.](#)

[HB 3230 A](#) Universal (Legal) Representation for persons in immigration matters. This funding request was reduced to \$2M and is listed in the end of session program bill [HB 5006.](#) (DAS will administer the funds to Innovation Law Lab for Immigration Defense). March [League Testimony](#) and [June 18 League letter.](#)

[SB 718](#) Refugee Resettlement Funding ended the session in W&M. Would have appropriated money from the General Fund to the Department of Human Services to award grants to refugee resettlement agencies to provide specified services to refugees. Fiscal \$4.3M. [League Testimony.](#) Related, Find Link to Oregon Refugee Program [HERE.](#) The Legislative Emergency-Board has funded \$40M to the Fund. Find program funding reporting [HERE.](#) Find Oregon Immigrant and Refugee Funders Collaborative info [HERE.](#)

2021 (rev. 2025, Claudia Keith)

Legislative session there was Major progress on many bills related to immigrants and refugees. OPB: '[Oregon lawmakers conclude 2021 session in a crush of bills](#)' '[Energized by 2021 accomplishments](#)', and '[Oregon's BIPOC lawmakers continue social justice and equity work](#)'.

# Rights of Incarcerated People

## National Position

### Position Implementation - Rights of Incarcerated People

2021 (rev. 2021, Marge Easley)

The League supported [SJR 10](#), an amendment to the Oregon Constitution that removes language allowing slavery and involuntary servitude as punishment for a crime. The amendment will appear on the 2022 ballot as a legislative referral. The League also supported [SIM 2](#), urging Congress to remove a similar clause in the 13th Amendment to the US Constitution.

2022 (rev. 2022, Marge Easley)

With the passage of [SB 1584](#), the Oregon Justice for Exonerees Act, Oregon became the 38<sup>th</sup> state to enact a law establishing a process for awarding restitution to those able to prove wrongful conviction of a felony.

# Health Policy

## Adult Mental Health in Oregon

Adopted January 1987; Educational Update 2001\*; language update 2008\*\*

- A. The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports a comprehensive and integrated adult mental health services delivery system in Oregon which:**
1. Includes both community and state programs and facilities;
  2. Provides for coordination of local and state mental health planning based on regular needs assessments;
  3. Provides funding by a coordinated mix of federal, state, local, and private sector dollars; and
  4. Includes state budget allocations that reflect service priorities jointly determined by Community Mental Health Programs and the state Addictions and Mental Health Division.
- K. The League supports the concept of care, treatment, and support in the least restrictive environment possible which:**
1. Ensures continuity of care and humaneness; and
  2. Balances the rights and safety of individuals with mental disorders, other interested parties, and society in general.
- L. The League believes that the mental health delivery system should include:**
1. Adults with:
    - a. Mental and emotional illness; and
    - b. Alcohol and drug addiction.
  17. Services that focus on recovery of the individual through use of evidence-based crisis intervention and ongoing support. These services could include alternatives to hospitalization, early intervention, residential services, supportive housing, and services delivered by peers in sufficient mix and quantity to afford an acceptable quality of life for consumers and their families.
  18. Mental health service providers, administrators, advocates, consumers, their families, and lay citizens as participants in:
    - a. Service delivery planning;
    - b. The evaluation of services; and
    - c. The provision of community education.
- M. The League supports an adult mental health civil commitment process which:**
1. Ensures statewide consistency in the application of commitment statutes;
  2. Provides for adequate and equitable investigation and examination; and
  3. Protects the rights and needs of all interested parties.

\*Updated for background information only—no position change.

\*\*Updated for language changes only in the position statement—no position change.

## Position Implementation - Adult Mental Health

1987

During this session League supported revision of the civil commitment statutes and an increased Mental Health Division budget. We supported **HB 2324** which broadened slightly the criteria for commitment of a mentally ill person to allow for earlier intervention to help prevent crisis situations. League supported allocation of money for community mental health programs to provide residential, treatment, support, and crisis service to the chronically mentally ill. League also supported the governor's effort to return federal dollars to Fairview by supporting recertification.

1989

Major issues for League action during the session were: increased funding within the Mental Health Division budget (**HB 5027**) for community treatment and support services to the chronically mentally ill, provision for up to four local crisis centers for inpatient treatment to avoid state hospitalization, additional hourly wages for direct care staff in community facilities serving both developmentally disabled and mentally and emotionally disturbed clients, support for families caring for D.D. persons and increased staffing and physical improvements at the state's three psychiatric hospitals. The final budget represents a 25 percent increase in the continuing funding level for mental health.

The spending limit was exceeded to grant adequate funding for the Fairview Training Center to address health, safety, training and facility problems, and to downsize another 200 clients during the biennium with sufficient support dollars to community residential and vocational services. The very real problems of direct care staff wages were not adequately addressed and **SB 675** was tabled in Ways and Means. Two inpatient acute centers will be built, in Southern Oregon and in the Portland Metro area.

The League also supported **SB 92**, which changed the name of the Mental Health Division to the Mental Health and Developmental Disability Services Division. We supported **SB 91**, which would have broadened the criteria for intervention and commitment, rather than just state hospitalization. The original bill died, and the concept was not continued in other legislation.

The capital construction funds for mental health include improvements at the state hospitals, particularly in the forensics unit and at Dammasch, as well as rehabilitation at Fairview.

1991

The governor's proposed 1991-93 budgets for mental health and developmental disabilities services projected deep cuts in community mental health services, closures of psychiatric hospital wards, and elimination of vocational services for the developmentally disabled along with 50 percent reductions in early intervention programs. Because of the necessity of reducing General Fund expenditures due to education property tax replacement (Ballot Measure 5), the League and other advocates for improved and increased services to mentally ill and developmentally disabled clients were frustrated in their effort to be supportive of the needs and also fiscally responsible.

Although the final legislatively adopted budget is not at the service levels of 1989-91, many of the originally proposed cuts were not implemented, and the mental health/D.D. service system escaped devastation. The state funding mental health services for community are now going to counties as a block grant, and the local programs can be implemented to address directly the different needs in different communities. The fact remains, however, that only half of the adult chronically mentally ill who are in need of services are being served, and less than 30 percent of the children. There are more than 2000 developmentally disabled persons on community waiting lists for vocational and social services.

1993

The League supported the governor's Mandated Plus Budget for 1993-95 in Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities services even though the additional funding would impact the money available for higher education. Because the proposed cuts in mental health/ D.D. were not fully implemented, the D.D. vocational and family services were improved and lowering community services to the mentally ill was not severe. The legislature approved the continued downsizing of Dammasch Psychiatric Hospital with the addition of funds for support services locally for each person released taken from hospital support. Local providers are presenting proposals to care for the released clients in a state program called "passages".

Additional acute care facilities are to come on-line during the biennium to lessen the need for state hospitalization. More children's services have been funded, up about

\$90 million in the past five years.

Of great importance is the implementation of a phase-in of mental health services to the Medicaid eligible under the Oregon Health Plan, beginning February 1, 1994. The Division will continue to contract with counties for the provision of mental health services through block grants which can be used by counties for the services deemed most appropriate to their clients, rather than dollars allocated by service category.

The League also supported the Declaration for Treatment measure, which allows a mentally ill person to designate preference for services when incapacitated in the future, and the revisions to the commitment law that provide for a 14-day intervention and treatment designed to prevent hospitalization and provide stabilization.

1995

The League opposed the cutbacks in the 1995-97 Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities Division budget that would have eliminated a community outpatient mental health service for almost 10,000 non-Medicaid eligible children and adults. The legislature did restore the community funding but did not provide even a cost of living increase for community mental health workers. Dammasch State Hospital has been closed. In its place is a 40-60 bed facility in the Portland area and two 15 bed acute care facilities. Some patients were moved to another ward at Oregon State Hospital. The entire psychiatric hospital system is now called Oregon State Hospital with units in Salem, Portland and Pendleton. LWVOR will be monitoring the impact in the community of the Dammasch closure as well as the situation for care providers and the community support funding, should there be a budget imbalance from the prison construction program.

1997

The major concern of mental health advocates during the 1997 legislative session was funding for the Oregon Health Plan, with full phase-in of all persons eligible for mental health services. Only 25 percent of those eligible had been part of the demonstration project. The OHP budget, including mental health services, was approved.

The League is represented on the Mental Health/ Development Disabilities Services Division OHP Integration work group, which will be monitoring the complex delivery system being implemented. The 1997-99 approved budget for the MHDDS Division provides adequate funding for community services to adults and children not eligible for Medicaid as well as an add-back of the children's DARTS program, which was not included in the governor's budget.

The League joined other groups in lobbying for a cost-of-living increase for caregivers in all of the social programs who had not received any increase in four years. Just before adjournment the legislature added \$1 per hour, in 25 cent increments, to the wage package for service providers. Parity insurance coverage for mental health service with coverage for medical services was not passed. The League will continue to support the principle that limits and caps on services, if in place, should be no different for mental health than for physical health services. The League is represented on the state Mental Health Services Planning and Management Council and the MHDDS Division Mental Health Advisory Board.

1999

The League supported parity for insurance coverage for mental health treatment and physical health treatment. After no progress during most of the session, a compromise was passed in the waning moments that provides for a 25 percent increase in coverage of mental health conditions. Several serious cuts made to the Oregon Health Plan funding resulted in the governor's veto of the Department of Human Services budget. The health care funding for Pell grant students, funding for abortions for low-income women and other mental health services were restored just prior to the end of the session.

2001

Parity between mental health benefits and physical health benefits in health insurance coverage was not achieved in 2001 despite the strong recommendation from the Governor's Mental Health Alignment Task Force. Instead it will be the subject of an interim task force that will study and make recommendations to the 2003 Legislature. The one major recommendation enacted into law is the requirement for a comprehensive mental health plan from each county. Preliminary plans are due March 1, 2002. The local mental health authorities (county commissions) are now required to provide delineated mental health and developmental disability programs and services. Substance abuse programs are included.

Both of these areas were strongly supported by the League during the session. Some tobacco settlement funds may be used for these state and local studies. The comprehensive reorganization of the Department of Human Services (DHS), approved by the Legislature with oversight authority, affects the Mental Health/Developmental Disability Services Division since it now has been separated and abolished as a division. Mental Health and Substance Abuse is now a part of the newly designated Health Group within the DHS. Exactly how the mental health services and programs will be administered is being organized, both locally and at the state level.

The concept is to provide a seamless array of services to all needing them, with teams of specialists. The League supported the idea of reorganization, but is monitoring closely the impact on clients.

2002

The League supported, by letter to the Governor and the Department of Human Services (DHS), the designation of the Mental Health Planning and Management Council as the replacement for the statutorily required Mental Health Advisory Board. The Board was placed in limbo as a result of the reorganization of the DHS, and the Council is a federally mandated group which oversees a federal block grant for mental health services and has a broad-based membership.

2003

The League supported the proposal to revise the membership of the Mental Health Advisory Board to conform to the Mental Health Planning and Management Council and advise the Program Office for Mental Health and Addiction Services, with oral testimony before the Senate Health Policy Committee and with individual legislators. For unknown reasons, it was referred to Ways and Means (the dollars for administration come from the federal government), the Governor's office got involved because it also has a mental health group, and it died in committee.

Unfortunately, the statute requiring the old Mental Health Advisory Board is still on the books, though inactive, and the Council does not have state statutory recognition. The League supported requiring parity between the insurance benefits for the physically and mentally ill. The hearings in the Senate Health Policy Committee were positive except for parts of the insurance industry. There is parity for state employees through their health plan. The bill was referred to Ways and Means where it was defeated by the insurance industry's testimony and lobbying. It remains a major problem for those suffering from mental illnesses because of the caps in benefits.

LWVOR opposed severe cuts in mental health budgets.

2005

After four sessions of strong advocacy but no action, the 2005 Legislature recognized that equity in the treatment of mental and physical illnesses in insurance coverage of health care benefits was both necessary and possible. **SB 1** passed and has been signed by the Governor. The parity policy covers all group health service plans that cover two or more persons. The League supported a measure, which would have set state policy as supportive of self-determination treatment plans for consumer-survivors, and which established an Office of Consumer-Survivors within the Office of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OMHAS). The bill died in the House budget committee.

However, the newly formed Adult Mental Health Services Advisory Group of OMHAS, of which the League is a member, will continue the idea for the 2007 session.

Unfortunately, there was little restoration of the funds lost when the 2003-05 budget failed, and the Department of Human Services notified the Emergency Board of a shortfall of \$55 million in the allocation for mental health services. In a one-day special session on April 20, 2006, the Legislature passed a supplemental appropriation to address this and other budget shortfalls. The plight of the several hundred mental patients housed in the century old Oregon State Hospital continues. The Legislature did not clearly address the situation, and plans are now being discussed to transfer about 100 patients to two facilities being developed in the Portland area. This is a disaster just waiting to happen.

## 2007

DHS Community Mental Health received a \$10 million additional package for acute care in regional hospitals, case management for adult chronically mentally ill, supported housing and supported employment programs. Children's Mental Health Services in the community were included in that budget allocation. While additional funds were made available to the Addiction and Mental Health Services Division (AMH) for 2007-09, the level of support for treatment and programs is not back to the 2001 level. However, there were some positive actions:

- Legal recognition was given to the Consumer-Survivor Council, which provides advice and recommendations to the AMH Division of the Department of Human Services.
- Clarification was made for the use of Mental Health Housing Trust Funds to ensure their use for specific housing needs of the mentally ill in both institutional and community settings.
- Construction of two comprehensive mental health hospitals was authorized to address, in part, the closure of the 100-year-old state hospital in Salem.
- DHS will also offer Addiction Services for parents who have children in foster care or receive financial assistance from the state.

LWVOR supported the DHS budget additions as well as new revenue sources from alcohol taxes. The proposed taxes on beer, wine or liquor to support treatment did not pass.

## 2009

The Department of Human Services (DHS) budget directs the integration of Physical Health and Addictions and Mental Health by the end of the biennium.

**HB 3353** creates an Alcohol and Drug Treatment Policy Commission to plan for delivery of alcohol and drug treatment and prevention across human services and public safety agencies. At the direction of the Governor, addictions treatment will be funded through \$12.9 million of Byrne Grant funds to be used on drug courts for M 57 offenders who are redirected from prison. At a predicted 50% success rate, this is expected to result in prison savings.

The DHS budget was increased by the construction of the new Oregon State Hospital facility and the regional facilities to house patients who can be released from the hospital. **SB 911** required DHS to adopt rules for secure community facilities for forensic patients. **HB 2052** requires that the local public safety councils be notified of the location, rules and staff in these facilities. A budget note directs DHS to report at the February Special Session on a formula for the distribution of inpatient hospital bed funds for regional hospitals with mental health units. There is currently a shortage of local or regional hospital beds for mental health.

2010

The allocation of inpatient hospital beds were made to the metro area and outside the metro area by agreement of the service participants. The Oregon State Hospital in Salem continues to be remodeled during this interim. Local county residential programs are opening to provide housing for those released.

2011

The Oregon Health Authority has supervision over Addictions and Mental Health Services including the Oregon State Hospital and community mental health programs. The League testified in support of HB 3100, which improved the forensic patient commitment process. **SB 376, 420 and 432** modified the entrance and release from the OSH with the intent to restrict the resource to the most serious cases. The development of residential programs in the community was initiated.

2013

The Oregon State Hospital Replacement Project has been completed, and the Junction City Hospital is being built. The Portland OSH and Blue Mountain facilities will be closed as patients are transferred to community facilities or the new hospitals. The US Department of Justice has been monitoring the institutional staffing and treatment processes at the OSH, but the Dept. of Justice oversight has turned to the lack of services on the community level.

The Addictions and Mental Health Division plans to construct new smaller regional facilities.

Three living units will be constructed on the Blue Mountain property and others will be constructed to house patients discharged from the hospital to a lower level of care. Mental Health care is to be included in the treatment of Medicaid clients under the new health care plans.

2015-2016

Adult Mental Health received increased funds for community mental health in the 2013 session and reported back in 2014 on the distribution of the funds. The League commended the legislature for the investment in community mental health and has followed the development of the Medicaid programs integrating physical and mental health care under the Coordinated Care Organizations. The definition of a person with mental illness as a reason for civil commitment was revised to “unable to avoid serious physical harm in the future”. The Judiciary Committee passed **HB 2420** to require community mental health programs to evaluate offenders of lower level crimes and at lower risk levels in the community and provide services in the community rather than commitment to the hospital.

The new Oregon State Hospital in Salem and in Junction City are operating with court committed mentally ill patients. The Oregon Health Authority has sought to release patients to a residential lower level of care in the community but residential community placements lag for the residents ready to move. The Legislature added funds for housing for mentally ill adults in 2015 and 2016.

2019

The **Oregon State Hospital** has been over capacity due to court commitments for aid and assist evaluations for criminal defendants. OSH opened an additional ward in the Junction City Hospital to manage the cases. The hospital staff assess patients and treat for mental illnesses. If the patients respond to medications, they can be returned to court for trial. If they need long term treatment, they can be civilly committed for long term treatment. If they improve, they can move to a lower level of care in the community. **SB 24 and SB 25** set rules for commitments and **SB 26** required records be submitted to the hospital.

Community mental health clinics receive funding for management of mentally ill and substance abuse clients in residential placements or in private homes. **Oregon Health Authority** provides funding for mental health and addiction services in the community through Medicaid. OSH services are not covered by Medicaid only through general funds. Private insurance pays for some hospitalization and treatment for its members, but the majority of OSH patients are not covered by employers or private plans.

2021 (rev. 2021, Karen Nibler)

The **Oregon State Hospital** has been over capacity due to the increase in Aid and Assist Evaluations in the court criminal process. As a result OSH will open 2 new units at the Junction City Hospital. A workgroup recommended changes in the court process in **SB 295** to allow for evaluations and treatment in county mental health clinics. Additional funding for the assessments of substance abuse disorders in BM 110 was provided to county clinics.

2025

[HB 2059](#) which the League publicly [supported](#) , will fund residential behavioral health facilities throughout the state by allocating \$65 million from the General Fund for the 2025-2027 biennium. It is estimated that this funding will increase behavioral residential facility capacity by approximately 196 new beds. These facilities include inpatient psychiatric facilities, residential treatment homes, adult foster homes, residential substance use disorder treatment programs and crisis facilities. HB 2059 also requires Oregon Health Authority to develop guidelines for distributing these funds, which must at least include the ability to quickly put funding to use – including the availability of service providers, the bed-to-cost ratio with priority being given to shovel-ready projects, geographic equity across the state, and local community input on projects that will serve the highest need.

## Mental Health Services for Children and Youth

Adopted January 1975

**The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports a coordinated plan for comprehensive mental health services for all levels of need to children and youth provided under the direction of a single state service agency responsible for basic state standards. We support the appropriation of consistent and sufficient funds to implement state-mandated programs.**

**A. A well-coordinated comprehensive mental health service delivery plan should cover such concerns as:**

1. Community level services that are accessible, visible, and available to all income levels through a graduated fee schedule;
2. Community level programs that provide early diagnostic and referral services, 24-hour emergency care, treatment services and facilities, aftercare, and follow-up care;
3. The development of preventive programs;
4. Coordination of all levels of government and all public and private agencies working with children;
5. Standards of training for all personnel appropriate to job placement;
6. Consistent state funds supplemented by all available resources, public and private;
7. Utilization of all local resources;
8. Basic state standards which encourage quality treatment and care while permitting alternative programs.

**N. The League of Women Voters further supports consistent and sufficient state funds for special education programs in the public school, including:**

1. Programs based upon the child's individual needs;
2. Special training for teachers working with disturbed children.

## Position History and Implementation - Children's Mental Health

The two-year study emphasized evaluation of treatment services, juvenile correction programs, and special education in the schools at the state and local levels.

1975

League successfully supported three bills. One allowed private child care agencies incorporated in other states to operate in Oregon provided they met the standards of treatment and care established by Children's Services Division (CSD). Another bill incorporated three special education laws into one comprehensive law. Finally, a child abuse reporting law passed which included a League amendment that required reporting cases of child abuse to a local CSD office as well as to the local law enforcement agency.

1977

Reorganization of the Department of Human Resources was the major bill League supported. The purpose of the legislation was to increase accountability and designate lines of authority and responsibility. Efforts to weaken the child abuse reporting laws of 1975 were defeated.

1979

The most significant bill League supported was the Juvenile Services Act. It provides state funds for counties that develop a juvenile services plan that meets local needs. The bill established standards for dealing with children in the juvenile justice system and monetary disincentives for counties that send youth to the state training schools. The bill passed. League successfully helped in tabling a bill that would have placed a lid on Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) payments.

1987

League supported increased funding for children's mental health services and the development of a comprehensive, cooperative plan for all state agencies delivering services to mentally ill children. The funding for the plan died in the committee.

1989

The League supported the governor's proposed budget, **HB 5027**, and its enhancements. Final action by the legislature provided additional community services for children and youth in crisis. Two more prevention/intervention projects, and additional funding for educating developmentally disabled children in their own school districts.

1991-1997

The League has supported improving and increasing mental health services to children in the last four legislative sessions, particularly to children ineligible for Medicaid and adolescents needing out-patient community treatment. Adding children's services to the Oregon Health Plan was a priority accomplished in 1997.

2003

The League monitored hearings regarding legislation that passed affecting the Commission on Children and Families (CCF) county agencies. Local mental and physical health plans must be attached to the comprehensive plan for coordination of services within the community.

2009

**HB 2144** requires the Department of Human Services (DHS) to provide wraparound services to children in their own homes. The options for residential treatment have been decreased, and DHS contracts with a few private facilities. Most children's mental health is managed by county health departments and often contracted out to nonprofit agencies. Wraparound means a planning process for a unique set of community services and supports.

2011

**SB 420, 432** and **HB 3100** include youth in the fitness to proceed laws. The OSH does not have a children's unit. If a child or youth is placed in the custody of the Oregon Health Authority for evaluation or treatment, he or she will be in a residential treatment facility under contract with the state.

2013

Children's Mental Health will be covered under the Coordinated Care Organizations. A bill required that CCOs work with school based health centers that have been established in some districts. Another bill requires that OHA adopt rules to certify school based centers and assist with business practices. The centers can be reimbursed for services to children covered by Medicaid. OHA was asked to report to an Interim Health Care Committee before December 31, 2013.

2016

The Coordinated Care Organizations will cover all children below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. School-based health centers serve mental health needs, as well as physical needs. SBHC may bill private insurers and public agencies.

**SB 698** assigned a school nurse consultant within OHA. The current effort is to find reimbursement for nursing services before expanding the number of clinics in schools.

2018

The Short Session Reconciliation Bill added \$900,000 in funding for School Based Health Centers. The existing centers report that many of the visits have been for mental health issues. Advocates propose expansion of the SBHC model.

2019

The majority of children are covered under parents' private medical insurance or Medicaid through Coordinated Care organizations. The preferred treatment is within the family with children in the home. Private Hospitals and residential treatment programs through the Department of Human Services are options for children. The Children's Farm Home provides a secure residential level of care upon placement through the Oregon Health Authority.

2021 *(rev. 2021, Karen Nibler)*

The **Oregon Health Authority** has the responsibility of providing services in local health agencies. Many families are on Medicaid and children access services in county clinics or school based clinics. Placements in foster care or mental health residential programs are provided through the Health Authority. These services should continue to be monitored.

## Physical Health Care

### National Position

**Promote a health care system for the United States that provides access to a basic level of quality care for all U.S. residents and controls health care costs.**

### Position Implementation - Physical Health Care

1990-91

The State of Oregon has been examining its policy of health care and enacting legislation to provide benefits to those without access to health services. The League has monitored the progress of state policy through the implementation of **SB 27** (1989), the priority settings for health services, and the process for gaining Congressional approval of using Medicaid funds for the project.

In 1991, the legislature funded the health services program at \$30 million and agreed upon the health services list.

1993

Although the legislature will not be in session in 1994, the decisions made in the recent legislative session must be acted upon. We will be watching activities regarding the Oregon Health Plan, monitoring the implementation as closely as possible. This involves in particular:

- Viewing the degree to which expansion of Medicaid is actually carried out;
- Noting whether efforts are made to examine a variety of ways of financing access to health care for all Oregonians, including as single payer plan; and
- Watching whether health providers (especially hospitals) work to avoid further duplication or expansion of services.

In general, we will monitor the degrees to which our national health care positions are incorporated into legislation at the local, state, and national levels. At the level of national health care legislation, we need all chapters throughout the state to lobby their senators and representatives to pass legislation consistent with our principles.

As members of the Oregon Health Action Campaign, we will keep apprised of their positions on health care as well as to assist in their formulation.

1995

The legislature made some changes in eligibility and administration of the Oregon Health Plan (OHP), which will reduce the number of Oregon working poor eligible for coverage under the plan and slightly reduce the quality of coverage. Changes were included in the Department of Human Resources budget and will reduce funding for the OHP. Changes in eligibility include an assets test and eliminating some college students. The number of diagnosis/ treatments included in the coverage will be reduced and full inclusion of mental health benefits will be delayed for the entire biennium. The effects of these changes and the need for action will be assessed prior to the 1997 session.

1997

Expansion of the OHP to cover more low-income Oregonians was the top health care priority for the LWVOR this legislative session. Thanks to the lobbying of the many groups in the Oregon Health Action Committee (OHAC) including the League, and the passage of the 30-cent tobacco tax, the OHP was expanded to cover an additional 25,000 children under the age of 12 and 1800 more pregnant women. This includes those with family income up to 170 percent of the federal poverty level; the League was hoping for 185 percent.

Also, 1700 full time college students who receive Pell grants will be reinstated to the plan. A new insurance voucher program to help people buy private insurance was established with \$23+M from the 30-cent tobacco tax money for those who earn between 100 percent and 135 percent of the poverty level, maybe reaching 20,000 more people.

We opposed the voucher plan, but still see this overall expansion as a significant step forward and great improvement over the last legislative session when thousands of people were removed from the OHP. The 30-cent tobacco tax was used for the maintenance and expansion of the OHP as voters intended, (one third for expansion and two thirds for maintenance) and the 10-cent cigarette tax for the OHP was extended until December 1999. There are still problems of eligibility for some working poor families and students to watch. The new system of insurance vouchers needs to be closely monitored to see if families can really afford the co-payments so they can take advantage of the vouchers.

Another bill that passed, that needs monitoring, is **HB 2488** providing for Medical Savings Accounts, an entirely new concept in funding health care. If the governor signs it, it will take effect January 1, 1998 and could have tremendous consequences for current health care systems.

A new health care issue involves state funding for health services for legal immigrants following the loss of federal dollars due to welfare reform. \$4.9 million was allocated for those on SSI to supplement health care, food stamps, and long term community care. Certainly, good news! **SB 21**, the patient protection bill for those enrolled in managed care health plans is now law! This is another success story due in large part to the long negotiations of a small group from OHAC. Rule writing is very important to the implementation of this bill and will require careful scrutiny.

Finally, the protection for community assets when nonprofit hospitals convert to for- profits passed. But many other health bills failed to make it through the process. None of the bills requiring insurance companies to cover services provided by professional Oregon licensed providers such as counselors, marriage therapists, midwife providers, and other alternate licensed providers, passed.

1999

This was not a good session for the people eligible for the Oregon Health Plan (OHP) but it could have been. There was the tobacco settlement money and money available through the federal Children's Health Insurance Program. Instead, there will be insufficient money to continue funding of the plan at current levels.

An attempt was made to introduce a co-pay and to sunset the plan; the governor stopped these attempts. There was also an attempt to politicize the plan by denying payments for some types of procedures; this also failed. The good news was that the ten cents-a-pack cigarette tax was extended.

Legislation (**HB 2690**) passed allowing pharmacists to administer vaccines, immunizations, drugs and medical devices to persons older than 18 years. It is hoped that this will improve accessibility and decrease costs for the consumer.

2001

During the 2001 legislative session, many important health bills never received a committee hearing. Big issues included prescription costs, quality of health care and costs associated with the Oregon Health Plan. Two important bills that became law were **SB 819** concerning a drug formulary and **HB 3040** known as the “patient’s bill of rights.”

The cost of drugs have played a critical role in the financial problems plaguing the Oregon Health Plan and the drug formulary was one of the Governor’s strategies to try to curb costs. Pharmaceutical companies were worried that Oregon’s adoption of a formulary would lead to other states doing the same and they launched a major lobbying effort to try to stop the development of the formulary. In addition, some health groups were worried about access to appropriate treatment. In the end, compromise legislation created the formulary while leaving the final decision on drugs in the hands of licensed health practitioners.

**HB 3040** is the result of the Governor’s Work Group on Patient Protection and affects managed-care insurance providers. The legislation covers an external review process for disputes, the consumer’s right to continuity of care during treatment, a procedure for referral to a specialist and the right to a second opinion, the need for an advisory group to develop administrative rules that determine uniform indicators of network adequacy and the need for a limited consumer right to sue.

2002

The League supported the initiative to increase the cigarette tax in order to fund the Oregon Health Plan. We opposed the initiative to provide Health Care for All on the basis of the funding mechanism which was deemed inadequate and unstable.

2003

The OHP was completely revamped this session. The League monitored the progress to make sure health care would still be provided for those most in need.

Two bills, **HB 3624** and **HB 2511**, passed, that together created a systems change emphasizing managed care and prioritized populations and services. The state has requested federal approval of these changes.

Oregon is seeking the following changes: moving the line on the Prioritized List of Health Services from line 549 to 519; redefinition of the OHP Standard benefit package; flexibility to adjust optional benefits for OHP Plus adults depending on available state funds; expansion of coverage eligibility under the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) from 185% to 200% of the federal poverty level (income level); expansion of coverage eligibility under the Family Health Insurance Assistance Program (FHIAP) from 185% to 200% of the federal poverty level (income level); and addition of a new program called the Medical Expansion for Persons with Disabilities and Seniors (MEDS).

The League also monitored additional legislation affecting the health and long-term care system. The new law includes prescription drug bulk purchasing and a provider tax which provides additional dollars for health and long-term care systems.

2005

Dollar allocations in the Dept. of Human Services budget will translate into reductions in the Oregon Health Plan's Services. These proposed reductions need approval from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). Since access to and affordability of prescription drugs is an essential health care issue, the League participated in efforts to expand eligibility for the recently established Oregon Prescription Drug Program, but these efforts ultimately failed.

2007

The expansion of health coverage for children was an early legislative goal, but the increased tobacco taxes for the program failed to pass. The Senate passed **SB 3** for a Healthy Kids Program and **SJR 4** for tobacco tax funding as a referral to the voters. LWVOR supported the Healthy Kids bill but not the constitutional amendment to raise the tobacco tax. LWVOR decided on a neutral position on Ballot Measure 50 on the November 2007 ballot. The voters defeated M50, in part because it was proposed as a constitutional amendment.

The Senate Health Care Reform Committee heard **SB 329**, the Healthy Oregon Act, which directed the development of a new public/private funded health care system to cover all Oregon residents. An executive director and board will be appointed to make the recommendations on the program implementation to the next legislative session.

The Prescription Drug Program was expanded to include more participants, and the program will be included within the new Healthy Oregon Program. LWVOR monitored the hearings but did not testify on these programs.

2009

The Health Care Reform bill, **HB 2009C**, passed in June, setting the state on a new trajectory with the establishment of the Oregon Health Authority and reforms based on data collection. The funding bill, **HB 2116**, will assess insurance premiums to fund the expansion of health care to children and low-income adults. The League testified in support of **HB 2116** in the House Revenue Committee and testified in support of **HB 2009** in the House Health Care Committee. The League quoted the LWVUS national position for universal health care including cost savings. DHS/OHA will report to the Interim Committees and the Special Session on the progress of the implementation process.

2010

The expansion of health care coverage for children below the 200% of the federal poverty level has been occurring during the interim. The subsidy for family health insurance above the 200% income level started in January. The expansion of adult health coverage within the Oregon Health Plan has been limited by budget constraints. The legislature continued to pass bills implementing details in health care reform.

2011

Many health care reform bills implementing **HB 2009** passed this session. **SB 99** created the Oregon Health Insurance Exchange Corporation, which was mandated by the federal health care law. **SB 94** required uniform standards for eligibility, claims, payments, and authorizations for cost savings. **SB 101** provides dental care for all children enrolled in subsidized plans. **SB 514** covers high risk children in the Oregon Medical Insurance Pool. The League supported **SB 99** as a health care reform step.

**HB 3650** established the Oregon Integrated and Coordinated Health Care Delivery System for Medicaid recipients by January 1, 2014. The Coordinated Care Organizations will deliver physical, dental, mental health and behavioral health services in a cost-effective manner. **SB 204** created a 4-year pilot program in Central Oregon in Crook, Deschutes and Jefferson Counties with a sunset of January 2, 2016. The Oregon Health Authority Budget was separate from the Department of Human Resources Budget, except for Shared Services for business and administration. OHA will be negotiating managed care contracts with a 11.2% reduced provider rate. The budget included funds for **SB 608**, a subsidy for liability insurance for rural practitioners.

The budget assumes savings in the second year of the biennium, so it will be closely monitored during the interim. Please refer to the Legislative Reports for further details.

### 2013

The Oregon Health Authority reported that 15 Coordinated Care Organizations have been implemented to manage Medicaid clients. Early reports show a decrease in emergency hospital use as patients are treated for chronic conditions. CCOs are accountable for 17 metrics and could receive financial incentives for these improvements. The federal government grants for health care reform have financed this new implementation.

Cover Oregon is the new name for the health insurance exchange. Private insurance companies have submitted plans for comparison within the exchange. The federal grants helped establish the website which has been tested in October and November. Oregon will transfer the high-risk pool and subsidized insurance programs to this exchange. The operation of this new website and insurance programs will be reported to the Interim Health Committees and the February 2014 Session.

The Legislature set up a Task Force on the Future of Public Health Services in the new system. The county health departments now provide these services, but the task force will explore consolidation and regionalization options. The Task Force is to report to the October 2014 Interim Health Care Committee.

### 2016

The Basic Health Plan, **HB 2934**, asked OHA to explore the expansion of health care coverage. **HB 2828**, the study bill on financial options for health care is due to be reported to the 2017 session. Even though The Cover Oregon website failed, insurance subsidies are still available through the federal website with the requirement that the income tax filings must match the insurance income report.

The Oregon Health Authority has been reorganized to integrate Physical and Mental Health. In addition, Public Health has been reorganized under **HB 3400** to respond to decreases in federal funds and to establish new priorities. Public Health will continue to provide services in counties or regions and to track changes with data analytics. The toxics in children's products bill, **SB 478**, requested that OHA provide online information for parents.

2017

The Oregon Health Authority will cover all children including immigrants with passage of **SB 558**, which was supported by the League. The Oregon Health Authority continues to integrate physical, mental and dental care within the Coordinated Care Organizations. The Legislature attempted to pass financial regulations on CCO which failed. **HB 2388** on rules for Pharmacy Benefit Managers did pass with enthusiastic support from the League. **HB 2310** on public health governance acknowledged that funds were not available for all recommended services. **HB 2391** was an attempt to increase provider taxes or assessments to pay for OHA medical services. A referendum was filed to bring this to a public vote in January 2018. The League recommends the provider tax bill be affirmed with a yes vote.

The League supported **HB 2669** that would have required the state government to report the inputs or outputs of their toxic or harmful chemicals for public access. DEQ, OHA and/or the State Fire Marshal would provide that information. The bill did not pass.

2018

Ballot Measure 101 was approved by voters to continue the assessments on hospitals, providers and insurance companies to provide funds for Medicare services. The League supported the ballot measure but did not support **HJR 203** which asked for a constitutional amendment to declare that access to health care was a fundamental right. The League was concerned about the financial repercussions and the lack of state revenue to cover this commitment. The Measure did not pass the Senate Health Care Committee. The League also supported bills to restrict pharmacy costs.

2019

The **Oregon Health Authority** served four million people in 2019 so revenue increases were needed. **HB 2010** provided hospital and insurance assessments. **HB 2270** increased taxes on cigarettes, cigars, tobacco and vaping products. The League submitted comments on the **OHA Budget SB 5525**.

**Public Health** will provide a new universal home visiting program for parents and new babies in **SB 526**.

**School Based Health Centers** were funded in 6 school districts and 10 districts were given planning grants in **HB 3165**. Students may receive both physical and mental health services, which can be billed to private insurance or Medicaid through Coordinated Care Organizations.

The **Department of Consumer and Business Services** monitors medical insurance and prescription price increases. The League has been encouraged by this activity. **The Oregon Policy Board and DCBS** will be advising the **Task Force on Universal Care in SB 770**. The League supports expansion of health care coverage but remains concerned about funding.

2020

LWVOR supported HB1535 which would have authorized the Department of Consumer and Business Services to investigate methods of information collection from the pharmaceutical supply chain in an effort to control costs. The bill did not pass.

2021 *(rev. Oct. 2023, Christa Danielson)*

LWVOR presented testimony in support of SJR12, which established the obligation of the state to ensure cost effective, clinically appropriate, and affordable health care to every citizen of the state. Subsequently, in November, 2022, Oregon voters passed Measure 111 - Right to Health Care Amendment, which had the same goals.

2022

LWVOR successfully supported HB4052, which provided grants to operate two culturally and linguistically specific mobile health units, as pilot program, to improve health outcomes of Oregonians impacted by racism. The law also created an advisory committee to make recommendations for robust funding for such programs.

2023 *(rev. Oct. 2023, Jean Pierce)*

LWVOR presented testimony for three important bills which were enrolled this year:

**SB 420** provided funds to establish a Brain Injury Resource and Navigation department in the Department of Human Services.

**SB 1089** created the Universal Health Plan Governance board to provide a comprehensive health system for all Oregonians. This bill continued the work of the Task Force for Universal Healthcare, but the Governance board was tasked with implementation. This also complemented the goal of measure 111 which was the constitutional right to healthcare amendment passed in 2022.

**HB 2395** was known as the opioid harm reduction bill. This bill widened the distribution and ability to administer opioid antagonists, which block the effects of opioids, to people in the community.

2024

HB 4149 Signed by governor Kotek mandates licensing of Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBM) and regulates the practice of PBMs to include specific reporting practices to the Department of Consumer and Business Services along with allowing rural pharmacies to continue to dispense medications to their patients.

2025

[SB 951](#) was signed into law. It strengthens bans against a corporate entity making health care decisions by limiting the power of Management Service Organizations. LWVOR submitted in [support](#).

Instead of private equity determining decisions about health care, this will be the decision of the doctor/provider and the patient.

[HB 2010](#) Extends the assessment format for funding the Oregon Health Plan otherwise known as Medicaid. The League submitted supporting testimony on [February 18](#) and on [March 10](#). The bill was signed into law.

This funding mechanism and our state's pledge to see all patients regardless of immigration status may reduce Oregon's Medicaid budget by up to 10 percent, threatening rural hospital viability and/or programs such as obstetrical deliveries.

[HB 3134](#) was signed into law. It requires reporting of data from insurance companies to the Department of Consumer and Business services, including the time from request to final determination of a prior authorization. Further, it removes the requirement for surgeons to seek prior authorization for a surgery mid-procedure. The overall goal is to reduce the burden of prior authorization on physicians. The League supported the bill with [testimony](#).

# Homeless Youth

Adopted 2007

**Parents are legally responsible for their children. When parents are unable to fulfill that responsibility, the League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that communities and governments at all levels have a responsibility to provide programs and services to meet the needs of runaway and homeless youth.**

**In order to help families stay together, prevent youth homelessness, and reduce the need for more expensive future services, the LWVOR supports providing services**

such as family crisis counseling, child care, parenting education, mental health and addiction treatment, low-cost housing, and health care.

When youth are separated from their families, the LWVOR supports providing services to these youth, such as shelter, food, education, health care, mental health and addiction treatment, plus outreach to encourage youth to use services. Older youth need additional services, such as assistance with independent living skills and with finding employment and more permanent housing.

These services may be provided by government or by private organizations that receive government and/or private funding. Coordination of these services is necessary to avoid duplication and service gaps. Youth should be served regardless of their race, color, gender, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability.

All levels of government should have funding responsibility for preventive and supportive services to families and homeless youth. Private organizations are encouraged to provide funding and services. Government funds should be adequate and allocated according to demonstrated need. Agencies must show that their programs are effective.

## Position Implementation - Homeless Youth

2007

LWVOR supported the Oregon Commission on Children and Families (OCCF) request for funds to initiate a Homeless Youth program, which resulted in a \$1 million allocation for the biennium. This amount is only a start to subsidize programs and will not meet the needs throughout the state.

2009

The \$1 million for Runaway and Homeless Youth was not continued for this biennium. A lesser amount will backfill the current funded programs at a lower grant level. See [Children at Risk](#) or the Legislative Reports for more detail.

2010

The Oregon Commission on Children and Families awarded grants to existing Runaway and Homeless Youth programs at a lower level due to fund cuts.

2011

**HB 3260** transfers the responsibility for Runaway and Homeless Youth programs to the Department of Human Services. DHS was required to integrate this program into its continuum of care for children 0 through 18. Total funds of \$986,574 were allocated for the program, which may continue with the eight county sites. The League testified in support of this transfer and prevention programs.

2013

The funding for 8 shelter care projects within the state was continued under the Department of Human Services. These programs accept youth who are not in the custody of the state. Young adults 18-21 became eligible for youth shelter programs and residential transition programs funded by the federal government.

2019

**The Department of Human Services had oversight of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Program in the Child Welfare Division.** DHS certified the shelter programs and supplied grant funds to existing programs. In this session, DHS requested that the program be transferred to the **Self-Sufficiency Division** so the funds could support children in fragile families and provide work training opportunities. Children in these programs are not in the custody of the state. Details are in **DHS Budget HB 5026**.

2020

After a bill that would have provided support for homeless youth failed to pass the League wrote testimony urging that the state provide safety in living situations, health environments, and continuation of basic education for homeless teens.

LWVOR expressed concern about the lack of stable funding in **HB 4039**, which would have directed the Department of Human Services to conduct a statewide assessment of the needs of and services for unaccompanied homeless youth and to award 1-year grants for host home programs.

2021 *(rev. 2021, Karen Nibler)*

Funding for Homeless Youth Shelters and Programs was supported in **HB 2544**. The League recommended that the Department of Human Services assess the statewide needs since the larger population areas programs received the funding. The DHS staff reported that statewide assessment had already been started.

2023

LWVOR supported two bills relating to increased appropriations for programs for youth experiencing homelessness. Unfortunately, neither bill passed.

# Housing

## National Position

### Criteria for Housing Supply

The following considerations can be applied to programs and policies to provide a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family:

- A. The responsibility for achieving national housing goals rests primarily with the federal government, which should:
  1. Assure that our economic system is functioning to produce and maintain sufficient decent housing for citizens at all income levels;

2. Compensate for any failure or inadequacy of the system by building, financing, renting and selling homes to those citizens whose housing needs are not being met;
  3. Give a variety of incentives to local jurisdictions to encourage them to provide within their boundaries an adequate supply of decent housing for low- and moderate-income groups;
  4. Withhold federal funds from communities that fail to encourage such housing.
- O. State and local governments should assist by establishing effective agencies to aid, promote, coordinate and supplement the housing programs of the federal government and the private sector.
- P. Government at all levels must make available sufficient funds for housing-assistance programs.
- Q. When families or individuals cannot afford decent housing, government should provide assistance in the form of income and/or subsidized housing.
- R. Government programs providing subsidies to the building, financing and insuring industries for housing for lower-income families should be evaluated in terms of units produced rather than in terms of benefits accruing to these industries.
- S. Government at all levels should develop policies that will assure sufficient land at reasonable cost on which to develop housing and that will assure fulfillment of other goals such as access to employment, preservation of open space, environmental cleanliness and beauty, and other aspects of a suitable living environment.
- T. Regional and metropolitan planning should be promoted to prevent haphazard urban growth, and housing for low- and moderate-income families should be provided as apart of all planned neighborhoods or communities.
- U. Lower-income families should not be segregated in large developments or neighborhoods. As their economic status improves, lower-income families should be enabled to continue to live in the same units as private tenants or as homeowners, if they are so inclined.
- V. Housing should be designed to meet human needs and should be built with amenities that will encourage economic integration within apartment buildings as well as neighborhoods.
- W. Publicly assisted housing should be included in viable, balanced communities, with provision for quality public services and facilities, including schools, transportation, recreation, etc., that will encourage integration and stability.
- X. Zoning practices and procedures that will counteract racial and economic isolation should be promoted.
- Y. State and local governments should adopt and enforce:
1. Uniform building codes with standards based on performance;

- 2. Housing codes to protect the health and safety of all citizens.
- Z. State and local tax structures should be examined and revised to:
  - 1. Benefit communities that build housing for lower-income families;
  - 2. Encourage private owners to improve their homes; Reduce speculative land costs.
- AA. Government, industry and labor should encourage innovative building techniques to reduce the cost of housing production.
- BB. Rights of tenants to negotiate for proper maintenance, management of facilities and services should be protected.
- CC. Housing programs should be administered by individuals trained for the jobs and sympathetic with the needs of their clientele.
- DD. Citizen groups should participate in the development of publicly assisted housing programs by:
  - 1. Evaluating performance;
  - 2. Activating nonprofit sponsorships;
  - 3. Supporting legislation;
  - 4. Developing public awareness of housing discrimination and need.

## Position Implementation - Housing

1991

**HB 2779** created the Oregon Trust Fund for the purpose of expanding the stock of low and very low income housing statewide. The bill passed both the House and Senate and originally requested \$30 million from the General Fund as start-up funding. Only the interest from the trust fund would be spent for housing, and it was hoped the trust fund would grow over the years to reach \$100 million.

With state budget restrictions very tight it was feared the trust fund might receive no appropriation and only be left with the original \$5 million to come from lottery funds. A compromise was reached whereby Oregon's Homeowner and Renter Refund Program (HARRP) would end after one more year of checks to low-income households and, in its place, the legislature would provide a total of \$25 million worth of programs designed to boost the supply of lower-cost housing in the state. The legislature will provide \$14 million for the trust fund over the next two years. In addition, another \$6 million will go for current housing projects so that the trust fund won't be tapped right away. Lastly, another \$5 million will go toward emergency housing programs, such as those issuing rent vouchers.

1993

A crisis in affordable low income housing is looming in Oregon as 115 federally subsidized apartment buildings are now eligible (after their 15-year contract with the Department of Housing & Urban Development [HUD] expires) to be sold on the private market. Historically, the new private owners always raise the rents. HUD gives first choice as buyer to community based nonprofit organizations and tenant groups.

HUD will provide 90 percent of the financing on the purchase price to these groups and if sold in this way to nonprofits or tenants. The housing must remain as low-cost housing for 50 years.

However, if after a 15-month wait, no nonprofit or tenant group steps forward to purchase the building, then the owner may sell to any private party. One problem is that there are so-called "captive nonprofits," which have ties to the owners and do not have the community's best interests at heart. The Oregon Housing NOW coalition reports that 4800 units in the state are at risk and that historically one-third of these low-cost housing units go out of existence. Of these 4800 units, owners of ten buildings, representing 481 units have indicated their intention to sell.

1995: During 1987 and 1990, Congress was threatened with losing several hundred thousand units of affordable housing across the country. Response to this crisis was the creation of the HUD "preservation" program. Established by law in 1990, the program was known as the Low Income Housing Preservation and Resident Home Ownership Act (LIHPRHA). In 1995 Congress faced a budgetary crisis. Pressure was mounting to reduce federal spending, with housing programs among many on the table to be cut. Funding for the preservation program has been questioned and many are calling for a restructuring of the program to reduce costs. In March of 1995 Oregon Housing and Community Services Department and the Network for Oregon Affordable Housing (NOAH) officially became the administrator of the technical assistance grant program for groups working with LIHPRHA properties. Grants are available to help potential purchasers of these properties conduct feasibility studies and to help residents or nonprofits purchase the properties.

The most popular proposal to restructure LIHPRHA is the "capital grant" program. Under this concept the properties would be transferred to eligible nonprofits over a five-year period rather than financing the sale through a 40-year insured mortgage with Section 8 rent subsidies. The new nonprofit owners would own the property outright and rents would be set at a level to cover operating costs. Twenty-seven properties in Oregon are now proceeding toward a sale under the preservation program. If the preservation program is eliminated, thousands of persons could be made homeless by rising rents. Even if HUD provides Section 8 vouchers to displaced

tenants, the community will face crisis conditions because of the lack of vacant and affordable units.

For low-income families sometimes home ownership provides a better solution to their housing needs than a rental. The Portland Housing Center was begun in 1991 and incorporated as a nonprofit to provide pre-purchase counseling, home ownership classes, mortgage default counseling, and referral to banks which have down payment subsidies (often the prime stumbling block to home ownership). Mortgage payments often end up being lower than the high rents paid before.

1997

There are two critical housing issues facing citizens of the Portland Metropolitan region. The first involves the urban growth boundary (UGB) established in 1979 by Metro, the regional government. The Home Builders Association and the Metropolitan Association of Realtors believe that the major cause of the escalating cost of homes is the lack of buildable land resulting from a tight UGB. This scenario will likely be repeated around the state, especially in areas with rapid population and/or job growth. LWV of the Columbia River Region is a member of the Coalition for a Livable Future, which is pressing the Metro Council to adopt clear, concrete requirements for affordable housing in new developments. One such strategy would be inclusionary zoning. The second critical problem is nationwide as well as statewide. As low-income housing contracts with HUD expire, many building owners are either raising rents beyond the means of poor people living in subsidized apartments, or opting out of the contracts in order to convert or sell the properties. Portland is now considering the possibility of buying downtown low income subsidized hotels whose contract will soon expire. All League members are urged to keep their eyes on such developments in their areas.

1999

One of the most controversial housing bills this session and one that the League actively opposed was **HB 2636**. This bill overturned a Portland ordinance and was written to prevent local governments from penalizing property owners for withdrawing property from subsidized housing programs without first giving the local government an opportunity to purchase the property.

The League opposed this bill because it violated local governments' home rule authority. In addition, it negatively impacted a growing shortage of low income

housing stock. After negotiations and modifications, the bill passed. **HB 2636** emphasizes procedure and eliminates a local government's ability to levy fees or fines for withdrawing property from the low-cost housing pool.

Local governments may require property owners to provide local governments and tenants notice of pending contract expiration one year in advance, maintain the contract for the property in good standing and refrain from any action that would preclude local government from negotiating for the purchase of the property.

The League followed many housing bills, often lobbying in conjunction with other organizations; many of these bills passed. **SB 479** requires that churches allow homeless people to occupy their premises under certain conditions. **HB 2084** allows disbursement of investment revenue from the Housing Development and Guarantee Account.

**HB 2085** allows tenant association-supported non-profits to negotiate to buy manufactured dwelling properties for the use of low-income residences. **HB 2662**, requested by rental property owners in northeastern Oregon, authorizes the Housing Community Services Department to study the availability of affordable housing in every community. The findings of this survey will provide guidelines for the department's provision of state support. **HB 2087** and **HB 2090** extend to the year 2010 qualification time for tax breaks intended to encourage affordable housing.

The League opposed **HB 2658**, which has become law. It limits local governments' choice of a land use planning tool, inclusionary zoning. Local governments have used inclusionary zoning to enable them to reach affordable housing goals as well as to reach goals related to preventing urban sprawl.

2001

The League supported **HB 3400** at the 2001 legislative session, based on the national League's housing position. **HB 3400** would allow any standard metropolitan statistical area (SMSA) in the state with a population of 500,000 or more to establish an "affordable housing district."

The district could then impose a real estate transfer tax. The monies accruing from such a tax on the sale of residential, commercial and industrial property would establish a regional housing fund. Residential property affordable to people earning 80% of median income would be exempt from the tax. The bill failed in the House Revenue Committee.

2003

An effort to repeal the prohibition on real estate transfer taxes died in committee. The Portland League wrote a letter in support of the bill because the taxes could be used for low-cost housing.

2005

**SB 1048**, requesting the Homeless Advisory Council to develop a 10-year plan to end homelessness, passed the Senate but died in the House.

2007

The Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) budget received funds to restore its Housing Fund and plans to retain subsidized housing capacity. LWVOR supported the OHCS budget with subsidized rentals for families and homeless shelters for families and youth. Through the Housing Alliance, LWVOR signed on as a supporter of **SB 38** and **HB 3551**, which would have implemented a real estate document recording fee to raise revenue for affordable housing, but neither measure received the required 3/5-majority vote. The revenue plan may be brought back to the 2008 special session.

2009

The Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) department continues to work on the preservation of expiring federal housing projects. The Document Recording Fee passed early this session and will support several OHCS housing programs. The League sent a letter in support. Due to the economy, homeless programs were a priority this session. **SB 200** defined Homelessness and set a goal to end homelessness for the state. There was no allocation of resources attached to the bill.

2011

The Oregon Housing and Community Services Department Budget, **HB 5515**, included priorities for food programs and housing assistance programs for unemployed, low income, and homeless individuals and families. The agency continues to provide funding from lottery bonds to preserve affordable housing units. The League testified on this budget to support meeting basic human needs and the services this agency provides, especially during an economic recession.

2013

Oregon Housing and Community Services Department administration was funded for one year with a reorganization anticipated in the February 2014 session. This agency has federal funds for Neighborhood Stabilization and Foreclosure Mediation

Programs, which are due to be expended in the biennium. The agency is to report on alternative methods of service delivery for its programs in housing, energy and weatherization. The League has supported this budget due to the anti-poverty programs, such as emergency shelters and food bank resources. Lottery Bonds will support preservation of affordable housing projects. An addition to the Document Recording Fee will pay for veterans housing.

## 2015

We supported **HB 2564**, which would have removed the ban on inclusionary zoning and allowed local governments to consider adding a requirement that a percentage of units in a development are affordable to households below a certain income level. This bill also did not pass. We expect it to return in 2016.

The League monitored **HB 2881** that would have required the Dept. of State Lands to offer “excess” lands for use as affordable housing. Since there are a number of other reasonable uses for this land, we felt a broader discussion should occur before moving this idea forward.

## 2016

Oregon Housing and Community Services Department was reorganized and transferred food programs to the Department of Human Services. OHCS retains energy assistance, housing assistance and shelter options. OHCS will complete federal foreclosure programs and receive Lottery bonds to preserve existing affordable care housing. Additional Lottery bonds will pay for housing for the mentally ill in partnership with The National Association on Mental Illness. The Governor requested \$100 million for affordable housing in 2015 which resulted in \$40 million set aside for this purpose. The League supported the OHCS Budget and the low income and mentally ill housing proposals.

The League supported **SB 1533A** and Section 7 of **HB 4001** as introduced to remove the state preemption on the use of inclusionary zoning. The ban on inclusionary zoning was removed with a number of caveats the League opposes. We hope to work to remove them in 2017. However, a new Construction Excise Tax in **SB 1533B** was allowed to be considered by local governments on behalf of housing which the League supports.

## 2017 *(rev. 2023, Nancy Donovan and Debbie Aiona)*

Many housing bills were filed this session in House Human Services and were passed to the Ways and Means Transportation and Economic Development Subcommittee. With the budget limitations this session, many of these bills were not expected to be

funded. The outcome from the Ways and Means process was to fund the Oregon Housing and Community Services Programs. The agency uses federal and lottery funds for housing projects, preservation of low-cost housing and services to homeless and low-income residents. The legislature-maintained funds for shelter and rental programs through regional community action agencies.

**HB 2006:** The League wrote a letter in support of the Mortgage Interest Deduction reform to rebalance the MID so that it would support more Oregonians in need of safe and stable housing. The bill did not pass.

**HB 2002:** The League submitted a letter supporting legislation to preserve publicly supported rental units, which are at risk of being sold to private owners and converted to market rate. If this happens, the federal rental subsidies will be lost. HB 2002 will require owners who want to sell their properties to give two-year notices to the Housing and Community Services Department, to local governments, and to affected residents. The bill passed.

2018

The Legislature pushed housing bills from 2017 through the short session. The League supported **HJR 201** that changed the constitution to allow non-profits and private use of local bonding for affordable housing, **HB 4006** on planning funds for rent burdened communities, and **HB 4007** that increased the Document Recording Fee to provide additional monies for the Emergency Housing Account, the General Housing Account and a Homeownership Assistance Program. The Reconciliation Bill provided \$5 million for emergency shelters and homeless assistance.

2019 *(rev. 2023, Nancy Donovan and Debbie Aiona)*

**The Oregon Housing and Community Services Budget SB 5512** includes funding of \$50 million for emergency rent and shelter and \$70 million to prevent homelessness and investments in supply of affordable housing. The federal anti-poverty programs are managed through this agency. The food programs were transferred to DHS in the last session.

**HB 3032** was presented by DHS staff to the House Human Services Committee and passed at the end of the session without public input. The amended bill proposed 3 programs for **Temporary Assistance to Needy Families** 1) **Housing** thru OHCS \$10.5 million, 2) **Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment** thru OHA for \$1.5 million and 3) **Education and Training** grants for \$3.5 million. The bill continues the suspension of earlier bills to restrict services through the end of 2021. The details were included in the **DHS Budget bill, HB 5026**. This bill provides significant support for families on public welfare.

**SB 595:** This bill, if passed, would have allowed local communities to decide if they wanted to dedicate 30 percent of their Transient Lodging Tax to fund affordable housing. The League submitted a letter in support, but the bill did not pass.

**HB 2001 w/-11 amendments:** The League submitted a letter in support of the amended version of HB 2001. Concerns related to Oregon's land use planning system were addressed in the final version. The bill, which passed, paved the way for planning related to missing middle housing.

**HB 3349:** The League submitted a letter in support of mortgage interest deduction reform. Had the bill passed, savings would have gone towards affordable homeownership and homelessness prevention.

**SB 1045:** This legislation authorizes local jurisdictions to adopt a property tax exemption for homeowners who rent space in their homes through a public or non-profit home share program. The League submitted a letter in support. The bill passed.

2020 (rev. 2023, Nancy Donovan and Debbie Aiona)

**HB 4002:** This bill would require Portland State University Homelessness Research and Action Collaborative to study a long-term rent assistance program and to report back to the Legislature no later than December 1, 2020. The League sent a letter in support of this legislation. The bill did not pass.

**SB 1534:** This bill would have allowed Oregon Labor and Industries to provide support to Oregonians in cases involving housing discrimination. LWVOR sent a letter in support of this bill, however, did not pass.

**HB 5202:** This bill would have provided \$20 million in Lottery Bonds to maintain affordable housing. The League sent a letter in support of this bill, however, it did not pass.

**HB 2001 and HB 2003:** The League provided comments in a letter addressing HB 2001 and HB 2003 implementation. Concern was expressed about cities having difficulty complying with HB 2001 by pushing the envelope with the Model Code provisions beyond the minimum compliance. Jurisdictions with limited staff capacity will be forced to develop their own codes. This bill passed in an earlier session, so the League's comments related to implementation.

**Housing Planning Rulemaking (Housing Production Strategy):** The League submitted comments to the Land Conservation and Development Commission regarding the Housing Production Strategy rulemaking, commending the requirement for local jurisdictions to consider more than just units of housing, but also affordability and other needs residents may have.

**Missing Middle Housing Rulemaking:** The League submitted a letter to members of the Land Conservation and Development Commission on a number of issues related to the HB 2001 rulemaking process for Missing Middle Housing (Middle Housing means duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, cottage clusters, and townhouses, which are allowed in residential areas.) Most of the comments related to land use, but the comments also pointed to the need for engaging the public in identifying financing options for much needed low-income housing. The letter also pointed to the importance of ensuring that trees and greenery are incorporated in housing developments, particularly in formerly redlined areas experiencing the heat island effect.

2021 (rev. 2021, Karen Nibler)

The **Department of Human Services** has provided emergency food and housing during the wildfire and Coronavirus pandemics. Federal funding was received to manage these demands on state services.

**SB 5011:** LWVOR sent a letter in support of the Housing Community Services Department 2021-23 biennium budget request. The bill will help prevent and end homelessness, provide affordable rental assistance, low-income energy assistance, low-income weatherization, and homeownership programs. This legislation passed.

**SB 852:** LWVOR sent a letter in support of reforming the Home Mortgage Interest Deduction. SB 852 would reallocate a portion of the resources dedicated to this subsidy to low-income Oregonians and shift the savings to a newly established Oregon Housing Opportunity Account. This bill did not pass.

HB 2842 provided money to help remediate homes to the Oregon Health Authority. The League provided [testimony](#) in support. The bill passed with \$10 million General Funds and created the Healthy Homes Repair Fund in the Oregon Health Authority to provide grants to qualified applicants.

2022 (rev. 2023, Nancy Donovan and Debbie Aiona)

**HB 5202:** The Legislature made a substantial investment in addressing the state's homeless and affordable housing emergency. At the urging of Governor Brown, Oregon Housing and Community Services received \$400 million in housing investments to focus on homelessness, building and preserving affordable housing, and improve access to homeownership. LWVOR submitted a letter in support. This bill passed.

**SB 1536:** This bill will provide resources for cooling including air conditioners and ductless heat pumps for people with low incomes. The bill requires that landlords allow tenants to install either window or portable air conditioners or provide cooled spaces for tenants. LWVOR submitted a letter in support. This legislation passed.

**HB 4064:** A range of technical changes will be made to manufactured home park laws to protect people affected by the 2020 wildfires and make it easier to build new

manufactured home parks or place manufactured homes on privately owned land. LWVOR submitted a letter in support. This bill passed.

The League submitted a letter responding to the Oregon Housing Needs Analysis (OHNA) proposal urging the Land Conservation and Development Commission to consider various actions that will more quickly provide housing opportunities for all Oregonians before taking action on the proposal.

*2023 (rev. Oct. 2023, Nancy Donovan and Debbie Aiona)*

LWVOR is a member of the Oregon Housing Alliance. At the start of the 2023 session, the housing alliance set its legislative agenda for the session. Priority bills included Mortgage Interest Deduction Reform (HB 3010), Reasonable Rent – places limits on rent increases (SB 611), Emergency Housing Assistance for K – 12 students (HB 2456), Private Activity Bonds for Affordable Housing (SB 225), and Eviction Reform and Reduction (SB 799).

**HB 3042 and HB 2653:** LWVOR added its logo to handouts describing legislation that would protect tenants living in regulated low-income housing with expiring contracts and incentivize owners who sell their properties to entities willing to maintain affordability. HB 3042 passed, but HB 2653 (incentives) was still in committee at the end of session.

**HB 2889:** LWVOR submitted a letter in support of locating the Oregon Housing Needs Assessment (OHNA) in Oregon Housing and Community Services. The OHNA goal is reforming our land use planning system to increase housing production. The legislature passed this bill.

**HB 3125:** This bill would have created a Public Drinking Water and Sewer Ratepayer Assistance Fund administered by Oregon Housing and Community Services. The fund would have allocated resources to help low-income households pay their water and sewer bills. The League submitted a letter in support, but the bill was still in committee when the session ended.

**HB 5019:** The League submitted a letter in support of this legislation that provided resources to assist unsheltered Oregonians, build and preserve affordable housing, prevent evictions, and increase homeownership. This legislation passed.

**HB 2001:** LWVOR signed on to floor letters supporting Governor Kotek's key housing legislation, HB 2001 and HB 5019. In addition to the establishment of the Oregon Housing Needs Analysis, the bills provided for modular housing development, funding for housing predevelopment loans and agricultural workforce housing. It also extended requirements for renter notification in eviction cases and addressed youth homelessness. Both bills passed.

**SB 976:** This bill, if passed, would have reformed Oregon’s largest housing subsidy, the mortgage interest deduction, and redirected the savings away from higher earning homeowners in order to benefit low- and moderate- income home purchasers. Some of the savings would have been used for homelessness prevention. The League submitted a letter in support of this reform, but the bill did not pass.

**SB 702:** The League submitted a letter in support of this bill that requires training to be adopted by the Appraiser Certification and Licensure Board for real estate appraisers and assistants to comply with state and federal fair housing laws. The legislature adopted this new requirement.

**HB 2983:** LWVOR submitted a letter in support of this bill that would have provided financing for Oregon Housing and Community Services and Department of Land Conservation and Development to develop new manufactured home parks and draft model codes for them. The bill was still in committee when the legislature adjourned.

## 2024

A number of organizations advocating for sufficient funding to preserve existing low-income housing, including the League, were not successful in their request that the Legislature provide \$30 million in lottery-backed bonds for housing preservation in HB 5201.

The League supported and the legislature passed SB 1530, the governor’s housing investment package that included funding for housing stability, infrastructure development, housing production, climate impacts, and recovery housing. Unfortunately, the final version of the bill did not include the \$15 million for affordable homeownership which the League supported. It did include \$5 million for the Individual Development Account program, less than the \$10 million the League urged the legislature to allocate in order to maintain current service levels.

A large number of organizations with an interest in land use, the environment, and housing signed on to a group letter stating their support for Oregon’s land use system and environmental protection with information on steps Oregon can take to produce more housing at the same time adhering to established practices.

The League supported, but the legislature did not pass, HB 4099 that would have given affordable housing developers more time to pay their System Development Charge fees in order to reduce the overall cost of development.

HB 4134, which the legislature passed and the League supported, provides state grants for specific infrastructure projects in communities throughout the state intended to make land available for housing development.

## 2025

After a flurry of activity by the state legislators and the Governor’s office, supported by housing advocates, LWVOR, and many others, legislators approved three major housing budget bills.

- General Obligation bonds (SB 5505)
- Lottery bonds (SB 5531)
- End-of-session omnibus funding bill, the “Christmas Tree” bill (HB 5006)

Due to declining state revenues, cuts were made across the board to agencies including the Housing and Community Services Department.

Resources were provided for a statewide shelter program, new affordable housing development, permanent supportive housing programs, affordable homeownership development, infrastructure to support new housing, and preservation of housing for older adults and people with disabilities.

Unfortunately, emergency rental assistance and homeless prevention services were cut by 74 percent. Preventing homelessness is much more humane and cost effective than sheltering unhoused people. Advocates, including the Oregon Housing Alliance (OHA) were able to restore \$11 million in funding for homelessness prevention. These restored funds were added to the omnibus bill at the end of the session. The \$11 million is expected to prevent 1,500 evictions across Oregon and avoid the trauma of displacement.

LWVOR is a member of the OHA. It has a diverse membership that spans the state. The OHA worked tirelessly to advocate for additional funding for emergency rent assistance and homeless prevention and many other bills critical to addressing Oregon's housing crisis.

Housing bills the League supported and were passed in the 2025 session:

SB 814 will be overseen by Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS). It expands those eligible for OHCS's Long-Term Rent Assistance Program. Under SB 814, Oregon Youth Authority (OYA) youth under the age of 25 will have access to long-term rental assistance. This gives them a greater level of housing security.

At least 14% of youth who were committed to OYA since October 2022 have already been homeless for a period of time. Studies indicate that housing instability increases the risk for reoffending. This bill will assist youth by providing a safe and stable home. They then can devote their attention to employment, education, and family. The League submitted testimony in support.

SB 973 protects residents of publicly-supported housing to require landlords to give notice when affordability restrictions are ending. This applies to tenants living in units with subsidy, applicants, and new tenants. For existing tenants, the notice requirements would be from 20 to 30 months. Landlords must warn tenants their housing will no longer be affordable. For applicants and new tenants entering into a new rental agreement, landlords are to provide written notice of when the affordability period will end, before charging a screening fee or entering into a new rental application. These tenant protections are critical to give low-income Oregonians time to find stable and affordable housing. The League submitted testimony in support.

HB 2958: would extend the sunset date to 2032 and increase to 25 percent the Earned Income Tax Credit for families with children under the age of three. Other families with children would receive 20 percent of the federal credit. The bill would extend the benefit to all childless working adults over age 18. The League submitted a letter in support. While HB 2958 did not advance, HB 2087 did. It slightly expands the tax credits and was signed into law.

HB 2964: requires OHCS to award loans to nonprofit affordable housing developers to cover pre-development costs of new housing. LWV testimony supported passage of the bill.

HB 3054 places limits on rent increases and other requirements by a landlord in a home park or marina. Those can threaten residents' ability to stay in their homes. Maximum rent increases on spaces in a larger park or marina will be six percent. Rent increases by someone who buys a home in a park or marina can be no more than 10 percent. Landlords will not be able to require cosmetic improvements or internal inspections in order to sell a home. LWVOR submitted a letter in support.

# Juvenile Justice

Adopted March 1981; Educational Update 2000\*

**The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes in coordinated planning and**

implementation of juvenile services.

**A. Prevention of juvenile crimes should be a priority in our society. Prevention programs should:**

1. Be available from early childhood to adulthood;
2. Involve family, peers, schools, and the community;
3. Make available early diagnosis and treatment for physical, mental, and educational problems;
4. Make available opportunities for all youth to learn responsibility and positive self-images in their own communities; and
5. Make available opportunities for learning parenting skills.

**EE. Services for juvenile offenders should:**

1. Be responsive to the needs of the youth and his or her family;
2. Make diversion programs available prior to entry as well as during involvement in the juvenile justice system;
3. Emphasize community planned and operated programs, including youth restitution programs;
4. Deal with youth offenders in the least restrictive environment;
5. Provide treatment-oriented secure custody;
6. Include appropriate evaluation, treatment, and placement for those already in the system.

**FF.** The League opposes holding juveniles in adult jails. If appropriate alternatives are not available, care must be taken to assure that juveniles are out of sight and sound of incarcerated adults.

**GG.** Status offenders should be diverted from the juvenile justice system whenever possible.

1. The League opposes holding status offenders in jail under any conditions.
2. Social services outside the juvenile justice system should be developed to meet their needs.
3. The juvenile court may be needed to provide help and protection for some youth.

**HH.** Basic standards for juvenile services should rest with the state.

1. Minimal federal standards are acceptable.
2. Local governments should have flexibility for implementing programs consistent with these standards.

**II.** Funding for Juvenile services should be consistent and dependable from all sources:

1. Local, state, federal, and private;
2. Include parental ability to pay;
3. Any level of government mandating services should provide substantial funding for those services.

**JJ.** There should be a uniform statewide data system that provides meaningful and retrievable information while complying with right-to-privacy laws.

\*Updated for background information only – no position change.

## Position Implementation - Juvenile Justice

1981

The League was successful in helping to defeat a proposal which would have lowered the age of remand from adult court from 16 to 14 years of age. League opposed legislation that removed status offenders from the juvenile justice system without providing alternative programs.

1987

The League supported funding for the Student Retention Initiative, which would provide grant funds for prevention and early intervention programs for students "at-risk." Funding was approved.

1994

The passage of Measure 11 caused major changes in the Oregon Juvenile Court process and sentencing juveniles in adult court for A and B felonies with mandatory sentences in the adult system.

1999

Several bills related to youth and weapons were introduced and some major legislation passed. **SB 344** requires any student taking a weapon to school to be arrested, detained, evaluated and released only by a judge. **HB 3444** requires school districts to create policies to deal with children who threaten other students or harm school property.

Legislation was also passed that will restrict teen driving. **HB 2440** addresses training and restricts the number and ages of passengers and times when a teen may drive. **SB 487** allows for the withholding or suspension of a driver's license for failure to attend school.

2003

LWVOR testified on the Department of Corrections budget, objecting to sentencing juveniles in the adult system and sending them to adult facilities. The League testified on the Oregon Youth Authority Budget, supporting the restoration of funding in community programs so options are available in the least restrictive setting. LWVOR also supported funding for juvenile prevention programs under the Commission for Children and Families (CCF). Juvenile crime prevention funds were cut 70%.

2005

LWVOR testified on the Oregon Youth Authority (OYA) budget, **SB 5530**, supporting the increased funding for 285 additional beds within the state correctional facilities. OYA presented forecast data to support the request but this was denied in the final **HB 5125** budget. The chair of the Public Safety committee directed the agency to bring a proposal to the Emergency Board during the interim.

**SB 1059** created a Juvenile Psychiatric Review Board under the current Psychiatric Review Board statutes, which monitors those convicted using the insanity defense. **SB 1059** specifies that in cases of risk of substantial danger to others, a juvenile may be placed in a secure inpatient facility in the custody of the Department of Human Services. The Dept. of Corrections and OYA are allowed to transfer persons in correctional facilities to a state mental hospital for evaluation and treatment. (LWVOR did not testify on this bill, but supports treatment-oriented secure custody for youth offenders.)

2007

LWVOR testified in support of the Oregon Youth Authority (OYA) budget, specifically the restoration of additional secure custody beds in correctional facilities and the restoration of community placements and community juvenile department programs. The Oak Creek correctional facility in Albany will be reopened as a young women's facility, and additional beds will be included at 3 other facilities. OYA will also fund additional community foster care and residential placements. Juvenile Crime Prevention funds were increased but not restored to original levels.

Last session the legislature created a Juvenile Psychiatric Review Board under the current Psychiatric Review Board for adult offenders convicted using the Insanity Defense. The Juvenile panel started meeting in January 2007 and the Department of Human Services (DHS) has planned to manage the custody of those juveniles who are committed due to insanity pleas. DHS currently contracts with private agencies for the placement of children with mental health disorders. The secure custody placements in a locked mental health facility will be more expensive to provide. LWVOR did not testify but has monitored this program development.

2009

The Oregon Youth Authority (OYA) was initially threatened with 30% cuts because it operates primarily with General Funds. OYA had taken reductions in community placements at the end of the last biennium. The closure of units in correctional facilities and the Burns facility were considered, but there were objections from the public.

The League testified in support of the OYA budget in terms of the future costs of cuts to the juvenile system. The Juvenile Crime Prevention funds were cut 20% for the programs administered through the Oregon Commission on Children and Families.

2011

The Oregon Youth Authority Budget, **SB 5549**, was significantly reduced for this biennium. The state correctional facilities capacity was cut from 954 to 750, allowing beds for M 11, juveniles convicted as adults and public safety offenders but restricting county juvenile court commitments. The budget increased community placements (103 up to 658) in residential programs and foster care to partially compensate for the loss of state capacity. The budget also funded community supervision, crime prevention and diversion services at the county level.

The League testified on the OYA Budget with support for funding for basic services in the county juvenile departments and for treatment programs in both the community and state facilities. The League supported **SB 393**, which allowed a second look half

way through a mandatory sentence under BM 11, but the bill was not approved. The League also testified on **HB 2707** which set a default policy for detention, rather than jail, placement for juveniles charged with adult level crimes. This bill passed.

2013

The Oregon Youth Authority Budget provided for a stable state institutional population and increased residential treatment and foster care options for committed youth offenders. The agency will submit a 10-year plan on the use or disposition of state facilities and a progress report on the Youth Reformation Model to the February 2014 Session.

**HB 3194** in its original form included the second look provision for juveniles sentenced under M 11, but amendments eliminated this option in the final bill. Youth offenders sentenced in the adult system may remain in a juvenile correctional facility until age 25 and then are transferred to an adult correctional facility to serve the remainder of a M 11 sentence. The second look option would allow the court to review the case and could release a youth offender from the juvenile facility and avoid the exposure to the adult institutions. The League submitted comments during the **HB 3194** hearing process.

The Judiciary Committees heard testimony on the negative effects of Sex Offender Registration and voted to expunge juvenile records of sex offenses if conditions are met. Another bill stipulated that a juvenile sentenced in the adult system be delivered to a juvenile facility rather than an adult intake facility.

That process would eliminate a physical transfer and allow the youth to be delivered to the youth correctional facility where he or she would remain.

2015

The League supported the Oregon Youth Authority Budget for correctional facilities and community supervision. OYA will continue to house both juvenile and adult commitments until age 25 in its correctional facilities. In future consolidation plans one facility in Salem will be closed and youth offenders will be moved to the MacLaren facility in Woodburn. Workforce training will be expanded at this campus. The League continues to question the mandatory sentencing of youth offenders and the length of stay in facilities. In 2016 OYA will evaluate the sex offender registration requirements for parolees based on compliance with treatment programs.

2017

The Oregon Youth Authority Budget, **HB 5042**, was significantly decreased with the closure of two correctional facilities – one in Salem and another at the coast.

Residential treatment placements were also decreased in a budget restriction. The League supports OYA and the role of community parole and probation services to prevent further criminal behavior. Children of Incarcerated Parents are often in this system and in need of intervention.

2018

The Oregon Youth Authority closed 2 facilities and expanded the largest facility for youth committed for felonies in the juvenile and adult system. Open community placements were eliminated in the budget but may be refunded if needed. The League still questions the adult commitment of juveniles. **HB 4149** limited 3 conditions in plea agreements and may restrict other conditions in the next session.

The Court Appointed Special Advocates Program for dependent children has been moved from the Department of Administrative Services to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission. The CASA programs operate in the District Courts to represent the input from dependent children. The Homeless and Runaway Youth Programs have moved from DHS to the Education Youth Development Programs, where they continue to be underfunded.

2019

**SB 1008** made substantial changes to Juvenile Court charges and processes. Judges will now decide whether juveniles will be charged in adult courts in lieu of M 11 charges by District Attorneys. Judges will also conduct second look hearings for juveniles sentenced in adult court. Juveniles are sent to Oregon Youth Authority facilities and may be transferred to Adult Correction facilities after age 25. They will be notified of their right to hearings at the appropriate times and may be released by a judge upon a review of the case and the behavior of the incarcerated person. The League submitted testimony and worked with partners during the hearings and iterations of this bill.

2021 *(Rev. 2021, Karen Nibler)*

**SB 436** changed the term youth offender to adjudicated youth in statutes as the term youth offender is one who is charged but adjudicated is under court supervision. **SB 575** expunged juvenile records and **SB 817** eliminated fees in the juvenile system.

2023 *(Rev. Oct. 2023, Marge Easley)*

A Juvenile Justice Policy Commission was established to augment the work of the Criminal Justice Commission. The new commission will assist in the use of research for the development and support of innovations in Juvenile Services programs.

The expungement of records for youth under the jurisdiction of juvenile court was changed to a more automatic process. County juvenile departments are now required to conduct sex trafficking screening. Several Oregon Youth Authority (OYA) processes were changed, including the addition of a confidentiality requirement to conversations between OYA employees and peer support team members, a regular review of demographic data to ensure programs are culturally appropriate, and permitting those over 20 years of age to remain under the jurisdiction of OYA during the appellate process.

## Violence Prevention

Support violence prevention programs in communities.

## Position Implementation - Violence Prevention

2022

LWVOR successfully supported HB4045, which provided for grants for community violence prevention and intervention measures.

## Women's Issues

**LWVOR uses several LWVUS positions relating to women in supporting and opposing specific legislative proposals, statewide initiatives and community activities. The positions include:**

**The League of Women Voters of the United States believes in the individual liberties guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States. The League is convinced that rights now protected by the Constitution should not be weakened or abridged. The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that public policy in a pluralistic society must affirm the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices. The League supports "equal rights for all regardless of sex."**

**The League further believes that governments at all levels share the responsibility to provide equality of opportunity for education, employment and housing for all persons regardless of race, color, gender, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation or disability. The League supports programs and policies to prevent or reduce poverty and to promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families, including quality of health care, income assistance, housing and public transportation access.**

## Position Implementation - Women's Issues

1972-2003

Support for *Roe v. Wade* initially and currently.

1973, 1995

Support for ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment in the Oregon legislature.

1989-2001

Support for the Oregon Commission for Women's budget.

1990

Opposition to Ballot Measures 8 and 10, prohibiting reproductive choices.

1995-97

Support for the Women's Health and Wellness proposals, including anti-abuse laws and economic security.

1997

The Oregon Commission for Women, established in the 1960's, fell to the budget ax in the final hours of the 1997 legislature, receiving only a token \$25,000 for the biennium. Instead of a full-time director for this commission, as well as the other ethnic/minority commissions, they will have only a part-time person and very little funding for the commission itself. Instead of recognizing that the status of Oregon women is still far from equitable, the legislature chose to disregard widespread support and discriminate against diversity.

The League will be working with the new commission director and other support groups during the interim to determine strategy for 1999.

On the plus side for the session results, insurance companies can no longer refuse to cover domestic violence abuse injuries because they may be a pre-existing condition. Domestic assault was upgraded from a misdemeanor to a Class C felony (jail time) if it occurs in front of a child or is done by a person with a prior conviction. Consideration of gender parity on all state boards and commissions when appointments are being made is now mandatory, and victims of domestic violence will not be terminated from state assistance when their time period for aid runs out and will be referred to appropriate agencies.

During the session the League worked with the Women's Rights Coalition, AAUW, Planned Parenthood, and Legislators Kitty Piercy, Kate Brown, Cynthia Wooten, Patty Milne, and Jeanette Hamby, among others, on women's health and wellness issues.

While there was progress made on the domestic violence front and repressive reproductive health measures were not heard, there was no success in improving treatment for breast cancer. Among the bills left at the end of the session were insurance coverage for more than a 48 hour stay after a mastectomy, reconstructive breast surgery, and lowering the base screen for a first mammography from 40 years to 30 years. Also there is no universal insurance for contraceptives. These are ongoing

health issues for women, and we will continue to bring them before the decision makers.

1999

After considerable efforts for a hearing, legislation to continue insurance coverage for mammograms and gynecological exams was continued for another six years. The Women's Commission was fully funded (\$130,000) after extensive debate as to the need for it, and pregnancy insurance for dependent teens was passed. For the first time this decade, anti-choice legislation, mandated parental notification, was passed by the legislature.

The League opposed this measure along with many other organizations, and the governor vetoed it. Three negative bills were defeated in committees: banning of so-called "partial birth", requiring all abortions to be in a hospital setting, and downsizing of Oregon's Family Leave Act. We were unsuccessful in gaining insurance coverage for prescription contraceptives, one of the main reasons women pay up to 68 percent more for health care than men.

2001

It was a matter of protecting the rights of women during the session - opposing more than a dozen reproductive health proposals and supporting several social and economic measures, only two of which passed. The successful bills provide for a task force to examine the workplace environment for women including wage/salary discrimination and career opportunities, and an increase in funding for domestic violence crisis, prevention and shelter programs. We also supported increasing the grant dollars for childcare programs for postsecondary students at the state's public community and four-year institutions.

The Women's Health and Wellness Alliance with which the League cooperates worked very hard for a proposal to have health insurance coverage for prescription contraceptives, but hearings were denied. The EEOC has found denial of coverage to be discriminatory and lawsuits in California and Washington had found for the female plaintiff. It is hoped the insurance companies will act to close this health care gap for women in the interim. The League opposed 24-hour "informed consent," the elimination of health insurance coverage for pregnancy and birth, and the change to optional for county health programs to provide family planning information to low income families.

2002-03

The League met with the Women's Health and Wellness Alliance during 2002 to draft the legislative program which would move women forward. Members of the League, often in leadership positions, participated in local commemorations of *Roe v. Wade*.

2003

During the session, the League supported several of the proposals drafted by the Women's Health and Wellness Alliance including emergency contraceptives, insurance coverage for prescription contraceptives, paid family leave, insurance coverage for breast reconstruction following a mastectomy, breast-feeding privacy in the workplace, and parents as scholars (allowing education to be considered as work for low income families). Successes included insurance for breast reconstruction, parents as scholars programs, and funding for the victims of domestic violence budget for emergency contraceptives. Oregon still does not require health coverage for prescription contraceptives although it has been declared discriminatory by the EEOC and several states have enacted such laws after successful lawsuits by women plaintiffs.

We again had to battle against five anti-choice measures brought by Oregon Right to Life. The League joined many other groups and individuals opposing such bills as requiring 24-hour "informed" consent, fetal pain information, partial-birth abortion ban, limited access to abortion facilities, and parental consent. The 24-hour consent bill passed the House 34-22 but died in the Senate committee. None of the rest went beyond the House committee, although there was consistent lobbying from the anti- group to move them. A 24-hour consent proposed initiative has been filed for November 2004.

2005

Basic health care for women (insurance coverage for pregnancy, childbirth, mammograms, pap smears and cancer screening) will continue to be required without future sun setting, a positive result for the work of the Women's Health and Wellness Alliance this session. The rest of the women's agenda was not so fortunate. Oregon still will not require that health policies cover the cost of prescription contraceptives nor will emergency contraception be available from pharmacists after a sexual assault.

For the first time the Oregon Pharmacy Association agreed to participate in the plan, but the House Speaker would not allow the bill to move. The Pro-Choice Coalition of Oregon, of which the League is a member, prevented the movement of five anti- choice bills including 24-hour informed consent and parental notification. The bills

regarding death of fetuses were not passed. There will be no expansion of the family leave act, but there will be funding continued for victims of sexual and domestic violence through the Department of Justice budget.

2007

This session adopted proposals for which advocates had been working for five sessions. The League supported each of the following:

- Emergency rooms must now provide emergency contraception and counseling to women who have been sexually assaulted.
- Health insurance providers offering prescription drug coverage must now offer an option for prescription contraception.
- Employers must provide nursing mothers with space in the workplace to express milk.
- Additional funding has been allocated to the services provided for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

2009

The Women's Health and Wellness Alliance, of which the League is a member, had some successes this session. Among the bills passed was (1) equal accountability for perpetrators of sexual assault (when the female is unconscious or intoxicated); (2) establishment of a Maternal Mental Health Workgroup; (3) HPV insurance coverage mandate (particularly for teenage girls); (4) preventative prescriptions for partners;

(5) access to clinical trials (requires insurance coverage); and (6) economic safety for victims of domestic violence (cannot lose job or time off).

What didn't pass was the Family Leave Insurance bill, funding for additional breast cancer and prevention treatment and expanded eligibility for prenatal care. The Alliance will seek informational hearings for these issues during the 2010 Special Session.

2011

The League participates in the discussion of women's issues as part of the Women's Health and Wellness Alliance, chaired by Rep. Carolyn Tomei and Sen. Diane Rosenbaum. From its relatively large agenda which is set by the members, the following were among bills enacted.

Sex trafficking of children was addressed by modifying compelling prostitution, by eliminating the ignorance of age defense, and by creating two offenses of prostitution and patronizing a prostitute, including a high penalty for the latter.

The Oregon Health Authority now must provide training and informational materials concerning maternal mental health to appropriate health care providers and hospitals.

Not enacted were bills to improve Oregon's law regarding expression of breast milk in the workplace by meeting the federal law, and the protection of infants from bottles containing BPA.

2015

Women will be able to purchase oral contraceptives for 1 year rather than monthly. Pharmacists will be able to provide oral contraceptives without a doctor's prescription.

2016

Rape protection measures, **SB 1571** and **SB 1600**, passed with bi-partisan and League support. The first requires that sexual assault kits be tested in a timely manner.

Currently there are thousands of kits being held in storage areas.

The backlog is not just a problem in Oregon but exists throughout the nation. The Oregon Legislature now has appropriated \$1.5 million to move the analysis process along, and Congress also has increased funding for states.

The second legislative action removes the 12-year statute of limitations if new evidence becomes available. This would include physical evidence such as texts or emails, corroborating testimony by someone other than the victim, other victim reports, or a confession by the defendant. These two acts continue the trend to cast the victim as such rather than placing blame on them.

2017

The League of Women Voters of Oregon continued to be active in the Oregon Women's Health and Wellness Alliance and, together with the Alliance, made legislative progress on many priority issues. In health care, **HB 3391**, comprehensive women's reproductive health coverage protects the full range of reproductive health services including abortion, and specifically calls out postpartum care for women, regardless of citizenship status; **SB 558**, Cover All Kids, extends health coverage for ALL children, including undocumented kids.

Bucking the national trend, anti-discrimination bills fared well. We finally had success for working women, passing Pay Equity, **HB 2005**. Also **HB 3060** requires all contractors who do business with the state to have a comprehensive anti-discrimination policy, as well as written policies regarding harassment and sexual assault.

Victims of sex trafficking will see significant improvements in their encounters with the judicial system. **SB 250** creates an affirmative defense to prosecution of prostitution; **SB 249** allows sex trafficked victims to vacate a prior conviction under certain circumstances. Also, **HB 2740** raises the age from 15 to 18 for certain increased penalties for traffickers, so that it's clear that all minors are off limits.

Successful legislation to better combat sexual assault and domestic violence includes: **HB 2972**, addressing college campus responses to sexual assault incidences; **SB 261** assuring that a victim's past sexual history cannot be used as evidence in a civil case, just as it is already disallowed in criminal cases.

2018

The Women's Health and Wellness Alliance did not meet during the short 2018 session, but LWVOR Action committee monitored many of the issues typically included on their agenda.

One big success was SB 1562 dealing with **strangulation**. Perpetrators of domestic violence use strangulation to intimidate and control their victims. It has very serious health impacts but, in most cases, has been only treated as a misdemeanor. SB 1562 increases the penalty for crime of strangulation and adds compression of the chest to the definition.

Additional policies regarding **sexual harassment in our schools** were enacted. HB 4150 requires sexual harassment policies of school districts to include requirements for notification, disclosure of specific information and outcomes of complaints for students, student parents and staff and the end of an investigation. Passage of this bill strengthens protections for both students and staff in our K-12 schools.

The **Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program continues to be elusive**. HB 4160 was introduced to ensure every working Oregonian will have paid time away from work to welcome a new child, to recover from a serious illness or to care for a loved one recovering from a serious illness. Several informational hearings were held but this bill did NOT move forward. A bipartisan, bicameral workgroup has been formed to

continue working out the details of this program and will report back in time for legislative action in 2019. We remain hopeful that 2019 will see success.

2019

Sexual harassment continues to be a topic addressed. This session saw a flurry of bills designed to address harassment in the Capitol itself, after allegations of lawmaker wrongdoings were largely covered up with no consequences. The proposals involved structural changes in training, reporting, and follow up actions for both victims and abusers. LWVOR monitored these measures and will continue to evaluate their effectiveness.

The big success this session was HB 2005, **Paid Family Leave**. Oregon will now have one of the most inclusive, most comprehensive paid leave insurance programs in the nation. Both employers and employees will contribute to the fund, and our lowest wage workers will receive 100% of their wages, making it possible for them to actually utilize this benefit. This law represents the culmination of years of work by LWVOR and many coalition partners.

2021 *(rev. 2021, Marge Easley)*

**In SB 497**– Domestic violations will require supervision of offenders in order to divert them from more serious violations and protect victims.

Paid family and medical leave in **HB 3395** delayed implementation until 9-1-22 with contributions due in 2023 and review in January 2024 by the Employment Department.

2023 *(rev. Oct. 2023, Marge Easley)*

Significant progress was made to assist victims of domestic violence and sexual assault with the passage of bills to extend the length of restraining orders from one year to two years, create the crime of sexual abuse by fraudulent representation, increase the statute of limitations from 12 years to 20 years for sex abuse offenses in the first degree, expand the crime of subjecting another person to involuntary servitude, expand the list of harassment offenses that require sex offender treatment, and allocate \$10 million from the General Fund to assist victims of domestic violence or sexual assault.

2025

[SB 548](#) establishes 18 as the minimum age for marriage. It passed the Senate with only one “nay” vote, and the House passed it with two “nay” votes. It was signed into law by Governor Kotek and is effective January 1, 2026. LWVOR submitted [testimony](#) in support.

# K-12 Education

## Assessment and High Stakes Testing

Adopted May 2025 by concurrence with LWVPA 2015 position

## Assessment and High Stakes Testing

Adopted May, 2025 by Concurrence with LWVPA 2015 position

1. Within our schools, assessment of student learning should include measures other than standardized tests. Such assessments provide a useful tool for
  - Monitoring academic progress
  - Helping teachers modify instruction
  - Identifying students who need additional support, and
  - Informing placement decisions.
2. Standardized tests should be developed in a transparent manner with a clearly designated purpose and should be normed on populations similar to the ones to be tested. They should be aligned with state-adopted academic standards.
3. Such assessments and their consequences should be modified based on needs of students with disabilities and those who are English- language learners.
4. Standardized tests may be useful in:
  - Comparing student performance across schools, districts, and states
  - Measuring overall academic progress and achievement within and across groups
  - Monitoring student academic growth, and
  - Promoting consistent content in subject areas.
5. However, standardized assessments should not be used for high-stakes determinations such as grade promotion or graduation requirements. =
6. They should not be used as a basis for evaluating the effectiveness of teachers or administration.
7. Funding should not be related only to standardized test performance. All schools should have adequate funding to enable their students to be successful.
8. The League believes that high-stakes testing negatively impacts student well-being, curricular programs, district budgets, and instructional time. These negative effects may include aspects such as student and teacher stress, a narrowing of curriculum to spend more time on tested subjects, lack of availability of student electives because of focus on tested subjects, demands on district budgets for testing and remediation, and loss of instructional time to test preparation and administration
9. Information obtained through testing should be made available to students, parents, and schools of attendance. Without student and/or parent permission, individual student data should not be available to colleges, employers, and the general public.
10. The League believes that legislation and policy regarding education assessments need to be carefully formulated to reduce potential litigation in areas such as special education, parental rights, and privacy concerns.

## **Attracting and Supporting Well-qualified Teachers**

Adopted May, 2025 by concurrence with LWVNM position

1. Implement measures to improve the preparation, recruitment, and professional development of quality educators with in-depth knowledge in core academic subjects and instructional strategies.
2. Provide adequate funding to attract and retain an educational workforce that reflects the diversity of Oregon's students.
3. Ensure that educators utilize materials that are culturally sensitive and address potentially prejudicial or biased information and behavior.
4. Provide educators with strategies to help them explore the cultural backgrounds of their students and develop content relevant to their students' experiences
5. Train educators to use effective strategies to help English language learners.
6. Provide meaningful, ongoing professional development in technological, multicultural, and social-emotional learning to support students in classroom and online learning.
7. Provide high-quality mentoring and teaming opportunities for teachers.
8. Compensate educators with salaries that are competitive with other professions requiring similar skills and implement measures to attract and retain well-qualified teachers, support personnel, and administrators.

## **Charter Schools**

Adopted May, 2025 by concurrence with LWVIL 2015 position

The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports accountability, transparency, and equity in the use of public funds for education, including charter schools. The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that:

1. Adequate and equitable funding is needed for all public schools, including charters. The financial impact on traditional public schools must be evaluated before charters are granted.
2. Charter school authorizers should evaluate the performance of existing charters before granting new charters or approving additional campuses.
3. Existing charter schools should be evaluated in incremental periods not to exceed five years (and preferably more frequently) for purposes of charter renewal.
4. Charters should be revoked or not renewed if a school repeatedly or egregiously:
  - Failed to meet content standards, pupil performance standards, or school climate standards identified in the charter contract
  - Failed to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management.
  - Violated any provision of state or federal law from which the charter school was not exempt.
  - Discriminated against students based on characteristics such as family economic circumstances, disability, race, creed, color, national origin, religion, ancestry, or need for special education services.
  - Used curriculum or instruction that failed to maintain the separation of church and state.
  - Failed to admit prospective students periodically throughout the year as space became available.
  - Failed to enforce truancy laws.

5. Employees should have the right to organize unions at charter schools.
6. The authority for approving and renewing charters should reside exclusively in the local school board.
7. Local voters should be able through referendum to request their school board to establish a charter school.
8. There should be adequate provisions for education of the public and participation in the authorizer's decision-making process.
9. If the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) or a body appointed by ODE has the power to reverse a decision by a local school board, local voters should be able through referendum to override the decision of ODE or the appointed commission.
10. There needs to be good communication among all public schools regarding effective innovations.

LWVOR has identified the following areas of concern about charter schools:

1. Financial impact on school districts. For example,

- Charters can place financial pressure on districts by drawing money out of the traditional public schools.
- When a student transfers between traditional public and charter schools, funding for that pupil should be prorated and transferred in a timely fashion.
- All property, equipment, and materials purchased by a charter school with public dollars should be surrendered to the local district if the school closes for any reason.

2. Privatization and profit-making. LWVOR opposes the presence of private, for-profit companies in the governance of public education. Subcontracting most of the management of a school to a for-profit organization should be prohibited.

3. Lack of transparency. Like other public schools, charter schools should be subject to disclosure of

- Potential conflicts of interest of members of the governing board

- Sources of revenue
- Salaries and benefit package
- The identity of the owner of any property and buildings
- Admission processes

4. Virtual education (provided by computers off-site, with students spending little if any time in a brick-and-mortar school). Virtual education is not appropriate for elementary-aged students except in rare circumstances.

5. Funding for virtual schools should be based on actual costs, rather than the same level of funding provided to other charter schools.

## **Civic Education**

Adopted May, 2025 by concurrence with LWVKY position

LWVOR believes that schools have a crucial role in preparing students to be informed and engaged citizens. Civic education should focus on knowledge and understanding of governments (e.g., local, state, national and other forms), including their structures, functions, and effects.

Effective civic education includes preparing students with the skills to participate critically and solve problems in civic life, and it provides practice for students working cooperatively in a community of citizens with rights and responsibilities.

Civic education should be integrated with history, geography, and economics instruction throughout elementary, middle, and high school instruction, and an additional course (or courses) in civics or government in high school to further prepare students for their roles as citizens.

When students graduate from high school, they should have acquired the following:

- The knowledge to influence the legislative process on issues of importance to themselves as well as others.
- The motivation to be responsible citizens involved in providing for the general welfare of people.
- The skills, inclinations, and self-confidence to participate as informed citizens in the electoral, legislative, judicial, and administrative processes of government.
- The process skills to work on projects cooperatively in various size group activities.
- Sufficient background knowledge of history and politics to understand the effects of voting on their own and others' lives.

### **Using Public Funds for Non-Public Schools**

Adopted May, 2025 by concurrence with LWVNJ 1995, 2007 position

The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that the system of elementary and secondary education must be fiscally and educationally accountable to Oregon citizens. Therefore, public funds should not be used through vouchers or direct payments, tax credits or other fiscal incentives or equivalent financial instruments to support students attending non-public schools

#### **For other LWVOR positions related to K-12 education, see:**

- School District Financing in Governance / Fiscal Policy – Tax System
- Children at Risk Early Childhood
- Child Care

#### **For LWVUS positions related to K-12 education, see:**

- Federal Role in Public Education
- Meeting Basic Human Needs
- Child Care
- Early Intervention for Children

2017

LWVOR Action dedicated a new portfolio chair to Education Policy and Education Revenue in 2017. While we have historically addressed Children at Risk through the Social Policy portfolio and Education Funding in the Governance portfolio; the Action Committee saw value in dedicating resources to follow Education separately since, according to the 2015-17 Legislatively Approved Budget (LAB) 2016 update, education expenses accounted for 51.6% of the General Fund and Lottery Funds.

For comparison other allocations from General Fund and Lottery Funds included: Human Services 25.9%, Public Safety/Judicial 16.2%, Natural Resources 2.1%, Economic Development 1.0%, Administration 1.4% and all other 1.8%. Yet, Oregon's four-year high school graduation rate is only 74 percent, one of the lowest in the nation partially due to past budget cuts and one of the shortest school years in the nation.

Oregonians without a high school diploma are more likely to be confined to lower paying jobs with less job security. Lower levels of education correlate with higher rates of poverty and family instability that is often multigenerational. More than half of Oregon public school students qualify for free and reduced lunch, up 10 percent in the last decade. Students of color represent about 35 percent of Oregon's student population. About 10 percent of Oregon's students are non-native English speakers.

Click on the OLIS links for League Testimony. With improved access to the legislative record, these links provide a permanent record of LWVOR Action testimony.

- [HB 3216 – SUPPORT](#) – directs Chief Education Office to conduct study for purpose of identifying practices that assist students in poverty families— signed into law, Chapter 403.
- [HB 2013 – Preschool program administered by Early Learning Division – SUPPORT](#), signed into law, Chapter 280.
- [SB 5516 – ODE Budget for the Youth Development Division – SUPPORT](#) funded, some cutbacks.
- [SB 5516 ODE Budget for the Early Learning Division, SUPPORT](#) funded, some cutbacks.
- [HB 2311 modifies definition of 40-40-20 regarding Higher Ed Goals – SUPPORT](#), signed into law, Chapter 264.

- [SB 395, 396, 551 Foster Support for College Students – SUPPORT](#), 395 signed into law, Chapter 332. SB 396 died in committee; SB 551 died in committee. These last two bills with fiscals were not funded in Ways and Means.
- [HB 2219 and HB 2691 re Civics Education, COMMENT](#), HB 2219 passed into law, Chapter 263. HB 2691 died in committee.
- [HB 3087 Family Leave – SUPPORT](#), died in committee, will reemerge in future sessions, League has supported similar legislation since 2007.
- [HB 2587 40-40-20 modifications for K-12 – SUPPORT](#), died in committee.
- [SB 118 Tax Abatement Re Schools – SUPPORT](#), died in committee.
- [Board of Education SB 746-SB 649 – COMMENT](#), bills died in committee but a workgroup of stakeholders was convened to consider the most viable structure for selection of Superintendent of Public Instruction and State Board of Education, likely to resurface in 2019.
- [HB 2261 Youth Development Council to include coordinating statewide services to youth who identify as LGBTQ, SUPPORT](#), died in committee.
- [HB 2657 Task Force on Out-of-School Youth, SUPPORT](#), died in committee.
- [SB 439, SB 565 and SB 595, education tax credits COMMENT](#), died in committee.
- [SB 437-1 – OPPOSE](#), – establishes education savings accounts for use by parents of qualified children to pay for certain **educational** expenses incurred from participating entities, a school voucher program taking public school funding for private schools and home-schooled children, died in committee 6- 13, likely to reappear in 2019.

## 2018

A NEW committee [Joint Interim Committee on Student Success OLIS recordings document](#) was established in 2018 charged with holding statewide “listening sessions” to gain public input prior to the 2019 session. The committee’s work was initiated based on five foundational principles:

1. Early childhood education is important to school success.
2. Attendance and having sufficient learning time are crucial.
3. Oregon must improve high school graduation rates.
4. The school system needs to be accountable and transparent.
5. Schools need stable and sufficient resources.

## 2019

There were more than 65 education-related bills passed in the 2019 session. Focus in this Issues for Action will mostly be on the singular most important aspect of the 2019 session for Education.

The passage and funding of the **Student Success Act** [HB 3427](#) brings the most substantial changes to PK-12 and career technical education (CTE) in thirty years, since the 1990 demise of property taxes and the shift of primary funding from local property taxes to the state general fund. When fully implemented, the Corporate Activities Tax (CAT) detailed in the “tax/revenue” section of this report is expected to increase investments in K-12 education by \$2 B per biennium. The Student Success Account is expected to distribute more than \$900 million annually under [HB 3427](#) when funds begin flowing during the 2020-21 School Year. [HB 5047](#) details the initial allocation into three areas:

**Equity-Focused Student Investment Account for:**

1. expanded learning time
2. student health and safety
3. class size reductions
4. well-rounded learning experiences (music, art).

**Statewide Initiatives, for:**

1. Full funding for Measure 98
2. Expanded nutrition access
3. Equity initiatives
4. Education Service Districts
5. High Cost Disability Fund additions through the SSF

**Early Learning Programs, 2020-21 School Year Key Appropriations include:**

1. Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education
2. Early Childhood Equity Fund
3. Oregon Pre-K Program
4. Early Head Start
5. Preschool Promise

Some bills introduced earlier in the session, were ultimately incorporated into the Student Success bill ([House Bill 3427](#)). [LWVOR testimony on education bills supported these earlier versions and the final Student Success Act.](#)

- [SB 12](#): early interventions and early warnings systems.
- [SB 14](#): statewide plan for early childhood through post-secondary education students who are American Indian or Alaska Natives and who have experienced disproportionate educational results.
- [SB 217](#): School Improvement Fund otherwise known as the Student Success Account.
- [SB 584](#): Statewide School Safety & Prevention System.

- [HB 2440](#): statewide education plan for students in early childhood through post-secondary education who are Latino or Hispanic and have experienced disproportionate educational results.
- [HB 2765](#): Breakfast After the Bell.
- [HB 2760](#): Universal School Meal Account.
- [HB 2939](#): Statewide Youth Reengagement System.
- [HB 2897](#): Early Childhood Equity Fund.

As in past legislative budgets, the State School Fund will continue to be distributed by a formula—taking more than half of the General Fund. Education is the singular greatest outlay in the Legislatively Approved Budget (LAB). The LAB for the 2019 session includes this major funding for PK-12: [House Bill 5016](#) – \$9.0 Billion State School Fund, Measure 98 – \$303 million, Student Success Act ([House Bill 3427](#)) will generate \$475 million through the startup of the Student Investment Account in 20- 21, and K-12 Facilities Bonding ([House Bill 5005](#)) provides \$125 million for bond matching grants and \$100 million for seismic rehabilitation grants.

In total, all bills increased the ODE’s budget by \$1.96 billion above the previous 2017- 19 Legislatively Approved Budget ([HB 5015](#)). This represents an increase of 17.7 percent to the ODE budget and includes a net growth of 109 agency staff positions (102.87 FTE). Nearly 58 percent of ODE’s \$1.96 billion budget increase comes from new resources generated through the passage of the Student Success Act. An additional 35 percent is from increased revenue or new General Fund resources added to both the ODE and State School Fund budget bills. The remaining 7 percent represents new General Fund and Capital Bonds appropriated for programs, grants, initiatives, and/or agency operations.

## 2020

LWVOR supported SB1566, which would have extended eligibility for financial aid for up to 90 hours of college credit to Oregon foster children in out-of-state placement. The bill did not pass.

## 2021

LWVOR supported HB2590, which was passed into law. The bill created a task force to develop policy proposals for the 2023 legislative session that would increase the likelihood of success in higher education for underrepresented students.

Another bill which the League supported, SB485, also passed into law. People providing student loans must be licensed.

# Public Postsecondary Education

Adopted January 1985, updated June 2018

The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes the primary goal of Oregon's public postsecondary education should be to provide a broad spectrum of higher education for professional, vocational, and personal enrichment. Individuals with higher levels of education are more likely to have rewarding careers, earn higher wages, and make positive contributions to their community. Through sustaining equitable access and a seamless path from preK to postsecondary education, more Oregon students will prosper.

## Postsecondary Education System

Oregon needs a strong, high-quality system of higher education:

- Oregon's postsecondary institutions have distinct missions and goals and should be evaluated based upon how each institution's goals are met.
- The State General Fund should give high priority to financial aid for students and general operating funds. Capital construction should come from other sources, including bonding, rather than the General Fund.
- In order to attract and retain quality faculty, salaries and research opportunities should be appropriately competitive.
- It is imperative in our institutions that we have good fiscal management and accountability for the funding provided.

For the most effective use of state educational resources, state public institutions should cooperate and coordinate programs resulting in:

- Consistent statewide standards, and
- Easy transfer of credit between schools.

If state funding necessitates limiting access, such limitation should consider equity as well as academic achievement and financial need.

## Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC)

HECC should place priority on:

- Providing one strategic vision for higher education in Oregon;
- Developing biennial budget recommendations for public postsecondary education in Oregon and making funding allocations to Oregon's public community colleges and public universities; and
- Developing standards for programs such as dual credit, transfer, and credit for prior learning.

HECC's role should be to facilitate system high priorities while allowing as much autonomy as possible within each institution.

### **Community Colleges**

The primary role of community colleges should be in the areas of:

- Workforce and vocational-technical training;
- Developmental education (e.g. high school equivalency, English language learning);
- Lower division college courses that prepare students for an associate's degree or transfer to university; and
- Hobby and recreation courses have a secondary role and must be self-supporting, as defined by statute.

If state funding necessitates limiting access, such limitation should consider equity as well as financial need.

### **Independent Governing Boards**

- Cooperation and coordination should be emphasized by all Oregon public postsecondary education institutions and governing boards.
- The performance of independent boards at each institution should be monitored to ensure that they are responsive to the institution's needs and the needs of the state as a whole.

Editor's note: for K-12 education, see **Fiscal Policy Position**, School District Financing.

## Position Implementation - Postsecondary Education

1985

The League supported the governor's increase in faculty salaries to improve Oregon's position in relation to comparable institutions in the U.S. The League should continue to monitor salaries so that Oregon achieves and maintains appropriately competitive salaries.

1987

The League supported putting additional state dollars into faculty salaries. The legislature passed a \$65 million capital construction budget for higher education including \$8.5 million for community colleges.

1989

The League supported the governor's budget for higher education, **SB 5510**, which included money for faculty salary increases at both the base level and above the spending limit. We spoke to increasing the percentages for both across-the-board and merit. The final bill included three packages for faculty salaries that will raise the

1991-93 biennial base significantly.

For this biennium, faculty will receive across-the-board increases of 5 percent on January 1, 1990 and 6 percent on January 1, 1991, subject to final implementation by the State Board of Higher Education. In addition, there are add-back funds to alleviate the 2 percent cuts taken at the universities and the 1 percent cuts at the state colleges that originally helped fund the salary moneys. The add-backs will allow either reinstatement of faculty and programs, increased salaries or both.

The third salary package, from the unlikely sources of videos and the lottery, would provide additional salary funds for merit increases and the retention and recruitment of outstanding faculty. **SB 879**, which would have added a faculty member to the State Board died in the Senate Education Committee.

1988

Because General Fund expenditures for education accounted for about half of the state's money, this was an area where the legislature looked for funds to make up the

\$600 million hole from Ballot Measure 5. Oregon's public higher education institutions took a very hard hit. Even though about 50 percent of the proposed \$100 million in cuts were not implemented, the State System of Higher Education lost more than 400 faculty and staff positions, 70 degree programs were reduced or eliminated, and access was denied to 2,000 students.

Tuition increased 6 percent per year for the 1991-93 biennium, coupled with a \$500 tuition surcharge. Some of the restored funds are being used for faculty salary increases. The League supported the measure which will allow the state system to have the same budget for 1993-94 as in 1992-93 and eliminate further program/faculty erosion.

1993

Again, the eight campuses in the Oregon State System of Higher Education were hit with budget cuts, resulting in a loss of more than \$50 million from the level of support in 1991-93, cut then because of Ballot Measure 5 (1990). Tuition raises and reductions of programs make up most of the cuts. Oregon students will have had a 60 percent increase in tuition over the past four years. Most institutions have larger classes, but have not cut faculty or staff significantly this time around. The League's position for the 1993 session was that higher education should not shoulder more than its share of cuts as compared with other education and social service programs, and that the legislature should recognize the importance of higher education for the economic future of the state. Access was a key issue, and the legislature refused to limit access to students even though the budget was reduced. Higher education is supporting the sales tax measure for November 1993 so that primary and secondary education can have stable funding and the state's colleges and universities will be able to handle the increasing number of high school graduates coming in the next five years. This measure again failed at the ballot box.

1995

With the passage of **SB 271**, which the League supported, the Oregon State System of Higher Education (OSSHE) has achieved a high degree of autonomy from state administrative rules and will be able to apply about \$10 million in administrative savings to instructional programs. Oregon is being looked at as a model in this area. The additional instructional dollars will be helpful since public higher education took another severe cut in General Funds for 1995-97. The reduction means higher tuition (4 percent more in each year), continued program erosion and inadequate salary adjustments for faculty.

The Chancellor of the State System and the OSSHE Board are examining ways to downsize and still maintain excellence. Several proposals will be discussed during the next year including keeping only two research universities; putting the four regional colleges together administratively and freeing them from the system; eliminating some professional programs which are on more than one campus. The League testified strongly in favor of funding at a service maintenance level and will work with the Higher Education Coalition to support development of a 1997-99 budget that builds back from the decline since 1990.

1997

Better access for students because of a two-year tuition freeze, improved funding for the recruitment and retention of excellent faculty members and the reinvestment of Oregon General Fund dollars in Oregon's public system of higher education made the 1997 legislative session a marked improvement over that of the past three biennia.

The League supported the System of Higher Education budget which ended the devastating cuts that began in 1990, but we also lobbied for better base salaries for faculty members, which did not materialize. We remain concerned about the poor position of Oregon higher public education in comparison to like institutions across the country and our ability to compete for quality faculty and to maintain quality programs. In addition to budget support, the League actively opposed the elimination of the state system's oversight of student incidental fees, which help provide cultural, political, social, athletic and diversity activities and opportunities for students. The proposal failed. The legislature has referred to the 1998 general election a measure to allow a pre-paid tuition payment program where funds could be set aside at current rates to pay for higher education when family members are ready. This also failed. During the session and continuing in the interim, the League is part of the Higher Education Lobby. The League has not yet assessed this measure in terms of support or opposition. An update of the LWVOR Postsecondary Education position, adopted in 1985, will take place in 1998.

1999

Oregon's public higher education institutions received a significant increase in support from the legislature after almost a decade of declining resources. The League continued its support of such an increase. Support also was given to the unsuccessful effort to increase the grants for campus day care centers, a major emphasis for the Oregon Student Association with whom the League works. We opposed efforts to allow high school juniors and seniors to take on-campus college courses with no funding grants to school districts. Before the 1999 legislative session, Oregon State System of Higher Education (OSSHE) changed its name to Oregon University System (OUS).

2001

Oregon's University System received more funding than proposed in the Governor's budget, including the first tuition hike approval in four years. The League supported the level of funding although the system has indicated it cannot sustain the current level of services for the money. Some OUS campuses have attempted to augment the legislative budget with increasing other costs (e.g. fees). The Emergency Board took them to task in September for going beyond their allocated budget and some funding may be reduced.

Community colleges were funded at the level recommended in the Governor's budget, but still far short of the amount needed to support enrollment growth, which continues at 4 to 5% a year. This results in serious budget cuts for most community colleges and restricts their ability to meet state program mandates.

2003

Community colleges and universities suffered additional cuts this session, after severe losses in 2001-03. As a result, tuition has risen as much as 32 percent on some campuses, classes have enlarged enrollments, and programs have been eliminated or curtailed. If the referendum of the revenue package for the budget fails, another \$14 million will be cut.

LWVOR supported legislation that directed Oregon Health Sciences University to distribute grants to postsecondary institutions to expand capacity of nursing education (includes community colleges). Also included in the legislation was a ten-member Oregon Nursing Shortage Coalition Committee that has two members appointed by the Commissioner for Community College Services. This committee will determine grant criteria and award grants. The legislation passed, but funding depends on grants from the federal government.

2007

Community Colleges were underfunded this session, but capitol construction projects were included in the budget. The university system gained an increase in operational funds, but the budgets were not restored to previous levels. Again capital construction projects were funded in separate budget appropriations. LWVOR did not testify on these budgets. (See **Fiscal Policy** for more information.)

2011

The Governor proposed an Oregon Education Investment Board to oversee all levels of education from Early Childhood through K-12 and post-secondary education. **SB 909** establishes the Board and the Early Learning Council to oversee a unified system of education services. The Education Investment Board shall submit a report to the Legislature before Dec. 15, 2011. The State Board of Education, Board of Higher Education, and State Commission on Children and Families will merge into the Investment Board by June 30, 2012. The League did not take a position on this bill but chose to do further analysis and study on the proposal.

**SB 242** redefines the Oregon University System with greater independence to manage its finances, operations and obligations, including purchase of property and construction of facilities without legislative approval. The state preserves labor contracts, retirement and benefits authority. The bill creates a Higher Education Coordinating Commission and a Student Access Commission to become operative between January 2012 and July 2012.

2013

After nine months of study and research, the Special Committee on University Governance made its recommendations to the Legislature, resulting in two major proposals. One establishes internal boards of directors for the University of Oregon and Portland State University, with Oregon State University also choosing that option. The four regional universities have the opportunity through the legislation to establish boards in the future. Among the powers granted to the institutional boards are the setting of tuition, with a 5% annual cap, hiring and firing of presidents, and financial bonding authority. The Governor appoints, with Senate approval, the 11- member boards that must include a student, a faculty member and classified staff member. The boards start July 1, 2014.

The second statute sets up the framework for the new Oregon P-20 seamless public education system. It is headed by the Chief Education Officer and the Oregon Education Investment Board (OEIB).

The higher education component is governed by the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) and includes the seven universities and the 17 community colleges. Until now, the community colleges have been under the jurisdiction of the State Board of Education.

This is an exciting time for the League to restudy its post-secondary position.

2024

LWVOR wrote [testimony](#) supporting a bill which would have provided \$6 million to public universities to train additional mental health professionals. There is currently a mental health workforce shortage in practically every county in Oregon, and this is preventing people with substance use disorders from obtaining the treatment they need. [HB5204A](#), which included an appropriation of \$4 million for the training, was signed by the Governor.

The tuition and fees required for public 4-year colleges in Oregon rank in the top third of the nation for expense. Furthermore, tuition and fees only account for 47% of the total cost of attendance of attending a public college in the state. [HB4162](#) would have provided funds to help pay for basic needs of students such as food and housing. Despite the League's support, the bill did not advance.

2025

The Governor signed [HB 2586](#) into law. The bill permits an asylum seeker who is a student at a public university to receive an exemption from nonresident tuition and fees. LWVOR filed [testimony](#) in support. The bill took effect immediately.