



Date: September 1, 2022

To: Mayor Traber and Corvallis City Councilors

From: League of Women Voters of Corvallis, Connie Bozarth, President

Re: Proposed Home Energy Score Ordinance

The League of Women Voters has standing positions on Climate Change and Housing, both of which support the City's proposed Home Energy Score ordinance.

The Corvallis Climate Action Plan (CAP) that was adopted in 2016 lists Home Performance Evaluations as a priority strategy to mitigate climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions because they inform people about energy efficiency and utility expenditures in houses they purchase. By discovering the anticipated ongoing monthly utility costs, buyers can plan for or mitigate those costs in an educated way, just as they would use miles-per-gallon data when purchasing a car.

The League supports a mandatory program, as the voluntary Home Energy Score (HES) program that has been in place in Oregon since 2009 has been ineffective. Very few inspections were conducted under the voluntary program. However, since 2016, when Portland and then Milwaukie and Hillsboro established mandatory home inspection programs, more than 20,000 inspections have been conducted, providing data and information about significant funding resources, such as Energy Trust rebates and incentives, for both home sellers and home buyers to make energy efficiency improvements.

The League requests that City Council amend the proposed ordinance to ensure that low-income home sellers are not burdened by the cost of the HES audit. We recommend that Council strengthen the language in Section 9.04.060 ("Financial Assistance"), stating that the City will provide those funds from available sources. Further, we recommend that the City include information about financial assistance opportunities in their communications about the HES program.

Because the League of Women Voters of Corvallis is strongly committed to both climate justice and housing affordability, we support the proposed Home Energy Score ordinance, including the recommended amendment, and urge its adoption by City Council.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.