



Date: December 1, 2016

To: Corvallis Mayor and City Council

From: League of Women Voters of Corvallis, Laura Lahm Evenson, President

Re: Corvallis Climate Action Plan

The League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) supports aggressive efforts to restore balance to the planet's climate systems by reducing atmospheric carbon dioxide to 350 parts per million (ppm), the upper safe limit. Aligned with this position, **the League of Women Voters of Corvallis (LWVC) supports the adoption of the Climate Action Plan, as recommended by the City's Climate Action Task Force.**

Although we support the adoption of the Plan for all the reasons stated on page 3 of the Plan, we also urge you to consider the following concerns and recommendations as the Task Force moves into the next phase of its work:

1. **Greenhouse Gas Reduction Target** – The target that was selected by the Task Force (75% reduction by 2050, compared to 1990 levels) is not based on the latest science. Although this target is aligned with the State of Oregon target, the State target was established nearly 10 years ago, in 2007. Current science indicates that climate change is occurring far more rapidly than was initially projected by climate scientists. We recommend that the Council direct the Task Force to consult with Philip Mote, Director of the Oregon Climate Change Resource Institute, to calculate a more appropriate target.
2. **Carbon Pricing** – Carbon pricing is listed as a key strategy in three of the six sections of the Plan (“Buildings and Energy” p. 12, “Land Use and Transportation” p. 15, and “Consumption and Waste” p. 18). The related action states, “Promote policies at the local, state and federal level that implement carbon-based fees or taxes.” As explained by LWVUS, “A carbon price increases the cost of fossil fuels and the products created by them and thus encourages lower-carbon behavior. It also generates funds that can be used for a variety of purposes, including, for example, increased investment in energy efficiency and alternative energy sources.” Aligned with the League's national position on carbon pricing, LWVC strongly recommends City Council to make this strategy the Plan's top priority.
3. **Implementation Costs** – In prioritizing which actions to include in the Plan, one of the key criteria was financial. While the cost of implementing an action is clearly a practical matter worthy of consideration, we are concerned that the process has not addressed the costs of inaction. The City budget is based on an annual cycle, but climate change will be with us for many generations, and typical cost accounting may not be appropriate in evaluating the costs and benefits of action vs. inaction.
4. **Role of the City** – One of the last actions listed in the Plan is “Educate City staff on Climate Action Plan...” Since local government is the only organization that has the authority and capacity to reach all residents and businesses, City leadership and staff will be critical in addressing both climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies. We recommend that City Council place a high priority on educating City staff on the Plan and their role in its implementation by including this action in every section of the Plan.

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns and recommendations.