

Tulsa League of Women Voters October Unit Study Materials 2011 – 2013 Water Study

In May, at the 2011 convention, a new statewide study of water proposed by the Tulsa League was adopted. The two-year study is intended to update and expand the current state League position. The committee will study water use, protection, management, conservation, ownership and quality across Oklahoma.

Background

Although the League of Women Voters of the United States reached a position on water in 1958 and updated and revised it in 1960, delegates to the League of Women Voters of Oklahoma Council in 1978 found that they shared a deep concern about the quality and quantity of water in Oklahoma and began to work on water issues at that time.

Passage of an expanded Safe Drinking Water Act in 1986 and the Clean Water Act of 1987 marked important milestones in the League of Women Voters national effort to ensure safe drinking water for all Americans and safeguards against nonpoint pollution. Additionally, Leagues across the country conducted surveys of local drinking water officials and held educational forums. The national organization has continued to work on the safety of drinking water, including urging Congress to protect women and children from toxic mercury by supporting a bipartisan resolution to reject the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) rule to delay reductions in mercury emissions from power plants.

League of Women Voters of Oklahoma Position on Water

The Oklahoma League of Women Voters of Oklahoma has studied water issues over the years, and currently has the following **Position on Water**:

Support of state policies and procedures which promote comprehensive long-range planning for conservation and development of water resources."

The League of Women Voters of Oklahoma supports state policies and procedures which promote comprehensive long-range planning for conservation, management and protection of water resources. Such planning requires:

- 1. Better coordination and organization at the state level.*
- 2. Elimination of inconsistencies and conflicts of interest among state agencies and between state and local interests responsible for water planning.*
- 3. Coordination and cooperation with surrounding states and with federal government to meet present and future needs.*
- 4. A reliable and timely data base in order to consider all alternatives before decisions are made.*
- 5. Support of research to enable the most fair and conservative use of water resources, tailoring future demands to supply.*

The League believes that comprehensive water planning and management on a state and area wide basis is essential to the optimum use of the state's water resources. Conservation and protection should be a prerequisite of all water planning and management.

1. *Such management should balance the particular needs of each locality/area with state and regional interests.*
2. *Mechanisms are needed, appropriate to each area, which will provide coordinated planning and administration among federal, state and local agencies.*
3. *Procedures should be established and adhered to, which will provide information and an opportunity for citizen participation in policy decisions affecting the directions which water development will take. Preparation of a state wide water plan should include a socio-economic and environmental impact statement in which all alternatives are fairly evaluated. A clear indication should be made of the benefits, the costs and who pays.*
4. *The federal and state governments have a necessary role in financing water resource development, but local governments and private users should share such costs.*

Consensus approved 1979. Position revised 1986.

October 2011 Study Questions for Tulsa League of Women Voters Unit Meetings

What water-related issues do you think are the most important for the League of Women Voters of Oklahoma to study over the next two years?

Please rank the issues below from 1 (most important) to 8 (least important)

- Water quality, including chemical pollution from hydro-fracking and biological sources such as animal or human waste
- Ownership and water sales, including within the state of Oklahoma (from one region to another) and outside the state of Oklahoma (sales from Oklahoma rivers or watersheds to municipalities outside the state)
- Privatization of municipal water systems
- Analysis of adequate fresh water treatment and water delivery systems and infrastructure
- Analysis of waste water infrastructure needs
- Water conservation, including possible effects of penalties or incentives
- Recreational water use and analysis of water quality in recreational areas (lakes, streams and rivers)
- Study of projected future water needs for urban, rural and manufacturing in the State of Oklahoma

Other water questions

What other issues should this water study address? (use another sheet if needed for longer response)

Bonus Question: Do you know where your tap water comes from, where your waste water goes, and the age of your current fresh water and waste water systems?