



NATURAL RESOURCES POSITIONS

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GREAT LAKES ECOSYSTEM

Position adopted 1974, 1981; title amended 1985; Great Lakes Diversions & Consumptive Uses Position and Great Lakes System Position combined 1988; revised 2005. DEI review 2023.

The League of Women Voters of Michigan supports preserving and enhancing the environmental integrity and quality of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Ecosystem. We support the attainment and maintenance of high water quality standards throughout the Great Lakes Basin, with emphasis on water pollution prevention. Water conservation should be a high priority of all governments in the Basin.

I. Protective Measures

To achieve protection and improvement of this valuable, international resource, the League of Women Voters of Michigan supports efforts to:

- A. Limit uses of "fragile," historical, cultural and scenic shoreline areas.
- B. Preserve wild and pristine areas within the watershed, with no new development in these special habitats without adherence to strict criteria as prescribed by federal, state, or local governments.
- C. Provide for appropriate recreational opportunities in and public access to sensitive areas without destruction or harm to the ecosystem.
- D. Protect the quality of the air and waters of the ecosystem by strict adherence to agricultural, industrial, residential, environmental, and commercial zoning regulations that prohibit the introduction of toxic or polluting discharges or detrimental land use techniques within the Basin.
- E. Protect the remaining dune formations. Enforce strict regulations of sand dune mining or development on the dunes.

- F. Strengthen upstream land management to eliminate sources of siltation and pollution.
- G. Control the invasion and spread of non-native aquatic and terrestrial nuisance species.

II. **Threats to the Ecosystem**

The League of Women Voters of Michigan opposes the following activities as they can lead to the degradation of the special natural resources of the Great Lakes Ecosystem:

- A. Inefficient or excessive water uses. Proposals for new or increased withdrawals within the Basin, e.g. for agricultural or municipal uses, should be carefully evaluated before being permitted. Withdrawals should be regularly monitored for potential or actual damage to the ecosystem.
- B. Destruction of marshes and other wetlands throughout the watershed. Mitigation should be accepted only as a last resort. Mitigation proposals should be rigorously evaluated and projects should be strictly monitored to assure no net loss to the ecosystem.
- C. New or increased diversions or transfers by any means of Great Lakes waters and adjacent groundwaters to a place outside the Basin. Projects already in place should be carefully monitored and restricted if there is evidence of damage to the ecosystem.
- D. Dredging and filling of river inlets, harbors, lakes or wetlands except for tightly-controlled, non-degrading and non-repetitive activities.
- E. Discharge to air or water of toxic pollutants and other material from industrial, agricultural, residential or commercial operations that may damage the ecosystem in violation of laws and ordinances.

III. **Public Participation**

The League of Women Voters of Michigan supports informed and responsible action on behalf of the preservation of the Great Lakes Ecosystem. Relevant information should be readily available to the public. Opportunities for public input should be timely, accessible, convenient and well advertised.

IV. **Role of Government**

The League of Women Voters of Michigan supports:

- A. Coordination of functions among various governmental agencies charged with protecting the Great Lakes and elimination of unnecessary overlap.
- B. Use of area-wide coordinated management plans and techniques in the solving of Great Lakes Ecosystem problems.
- C. Participation by all affected governments in the Basin in review and decision-making on Great Lakes agreements and projects, facilitated in open meetings and hearings.
- D. Strengthening of existing mechanisms for intergovernmental discussions and decision-making.
- E. Separation of responsibility for submitting recommendations for governmental projects from issuing permits for such projects.
- F. Monitoring and enforcement of treaties, ordinances, laws and master plans.

V. **Research Priorities**

The League of Women Voters of Michigan believes that research on Great Lakes issues should focus on:

- A. Effective, non-toxic control and removal of invasive aquatic and terrestrial species.
- B. Restoration of health to the overall resource.
- C. Survival of native aquatic and terrestrial species and their nutrient sources.
- D. Continual testing of Great Lakes water quality for impact from the following: pesticides and fertilizers, resistant bacteria, persistent pharmaceuticals and other chemicals.
- E. Evaluation of water accountability systems, groundwater monitoring and water use planning and conservation efforts throughout the Basin.



NATURAL RESOURCES POSITIONS

LAND USE

Position adopted 1974, Section III revised 1997. DEI review 2023.

LWVMI, recognizing that land is a finite resource, not just a commodity, believes that land ownership, whether public or private, implies responsibilities of stewardship.

- I. In decisions about land use, tribal, public as well as private interests should be respected, with consideration for social, environmental and economic factors. Each level of government must bear appropriate responsibility for planning and managing land resources. It is essential, at a minimum, that the appropriate level of government determine, regulate and guide critical activities and the use of critical land areas.
- II. A state land use plan should:
 - A. Contain a goal statement which provides for the preservation and development of particular kinds of areas and for planned and controlled growth and development.
 - B. Provide guidelines for land use planning. Local units of government should participate in land use planning.
- III. Tribal, affected communities and citizens should have access to the land use planning process through public hearings and membership on advisory commissions and boards. To guarantee responsive and responsible governmental decisions, tribal, affected communities and citizen participation must be built into the planning and management of land resources at every step. To these ends, the federal and state governments should exert leadership to:
 - A. Encourage formulation of land resource goals;
 - B. Develop policies and standards for conserving land resources;
 - C. Foster coordinated planning and management of land resources by all levels of government;
 - D. Foster cooperation among agencies and levels of government in establishing mechanisms that ensure consideration of all tribal, public and private rights and interest on the part of those who make decisions about land resources; funding for citizen information and review.



NATURAL RESOURCES POSITIONS

PESTICIDES

Position adopted 1992, revised 1997, revised 2017. DEI review 2023.

PESTICIDE USE REDUCTION

LWVMI supports the reduction of all pesticide use and replacement with nontoxic alternatives, for both rural and urban applications. Governmental bodies should encourage a reduction in pesticide use through the promotion of management programs such as Integrated Pest Management, sustainable and organic agricultural and nontoxic control techniques. State government should provide economic incentives to farmers and growers to implement those alternative techniques. State government should provide funding for training in these techniques to employees of public agencies and institutions, to commercial applicators, to farmers, and to private individuals. Anyone handling pesticides as part of a job should be required to demonstrate knowledge and competency and, before receiving a license or certification, be required to take a training course and pass a state-regulated examination.

GOVERNMENTAL REGULATION OF PESTICIDE USE

LWVMI supports the regulation of the use of pesticides by all levels of government. Government standards should be set for all lawn care and pest control or abatement companies. Adequate funding for all appropriate levels of government should be established to finance testing for over-spray, drift and water contamination. Pesticide drift beyond the boundaries of the targeted area should be prohibited by law.

The use of pesticides should be totally prohibited in the following instances:

- aerial spraying of residential neighborhoods
- wellhead protection zones for drinking water supplies
- vulnerable wetlands and other natural areas
- habitats for endangered species
- in areas adjacent to organic farm/garden operations

Where total prohibition is not feasible due to an imminent human health threat, extreme care should be taken to minimize quantity of pesticide used, number of applications and target area.

In the absence of federal regulations, state governments should enact organic labeling laws and organic farming certification laws. In addition, funding for increased testing for pesticides in food by appropriate state agencies is essential; states should be able to set residue levels for food that are stricter than federal levels.

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION OF PESTICIDE USE

LWVMI believes that lawn care companies, structural pest control companies, and agricultural pesticide applicators should provide the public, including agricultural workers and organic farmers, with extensive information about pesticides and pesticide use, including:

- purpose of application
- brand name of pesticide(s) used
- date and time of year when pesticides are to be applied
- label precautions and disposal information
- registration status
- amount and names of all inert ingredients
- name, address, and telephone number of applicator
- evidence of applicant's licensure or certification
- telephone number of state agency in charge of pesticide regulation
- telephone number of nearest Poison Control Center
- health symptoms and first aid

Because of the potential for involuntary exposure to pesticides, individuals should be notified prior to application of pesticides. Re-entry times and exposure precautions should be conspicuously posted. Information should be posted for interior and exterior pesticide application. Posting should occur in advance of application of any pesticide.



NATURAL RESOURCES POSITIONS

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

Position adopted 1972; title amended 1985, revised 1989; LWVUS position adopted 1973. DEI review 2023.

LWVMI supports measures to solve the problem of solid waste disposal.

- I. The state should:
 - A. Implement federal regulations and participate in federal programs;
 - B. Establish state standards and regulations which may be stricter than federal regulations;
 - C. Encourage coordinated state supervision and cooperation with local governmental units and regional arrangements of government for strict enforcement and implementation;
 - D. Enact and implement legislation which would enable local government to manage and pay for solid waste pick-up, disposal and resource recovery efforts;
 - E. Encourage re-use of all salvageable materials;
 - F. Encourage participation by private enterprise and educational institutions to find improved solutions to solid waste problems.

- II. Local or regional arrangements of government should:
 - A. Exercise main responsibility for maintaining solid waste pick-up, disposal and resource recovery projects;
 - B. Provide that costs be covered through local taxation, user charges, special charges to business and industry or a combination thereof;
 - C. Be able to establish stricter standards than those of the federal or state governments.

- III. The use of resource recovery techniques should become mandatory with the initiating assistance of governmental subsidies or tax allowances, with the ultimate goal of self-supporting or profitable operations.



NATURAL RESOURCES POSITIONS

CONCENTRATED ANIMAL FEEDING OPERATIONS

Position adopted 2009. DEI review 2023.

Adequate regulation and inspection of large-scale, confinement livestock facilities are necessary to prevent risk to area ground water and surface water supplies.

- I. Regulatory
 - A. At the state level, "generally accepted manure management practices" should be a set of preventive requirements rather than voluntary guidelines.
 1. Agency attention should prevent any contamination from manure retention systems, as well as manure handling and land application practices.
 - a. Facilities should be required to adhere to the federal Clean Water Act as well as to state rules.
 - b. Facilities should receive EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) and NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination system) permits before they begin operations.
 - c. At a minimum, testing of downstream contamination, soil percolation and saturation level profiles should be required at all facilities several times each year.
 2. The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) and the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) must collaborate on enforcement of CAFO (Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations) permit requirements and other state and/or local regulation.
 3. The State should reserve the right to impose a moratorium on any additional confinement facilities in all or part of the state when the environment and/or public welfare are jeopardized.
 - B. Local and County governments should have the ability to set additional zoning restrictions to reflect particular local environmental and health needs.
- II. Public Involvement
 - A. The public's right-to-know and the freedom of information about such facilities or any activity likely and/or known to pose environmental risks must not be

abridged at any governmental level.

- B. EGLE/MDARD should be required to keep and update a listing of all CAFOs operating in the state, and to make the list, as well as violations and fines levied, available to the public.