

## 8. Energy

### Statement of position

The League of Women Voters of Alaska (LWVAK) favors the wise use and development of a variety of energy sources to ensure a long-term sustainable cultural, environmental, and economic future for Alaska, and for all Alaskans. Alaska's constitution encourages "the development of its resources by making them available for maximum use consistent with the public interest", and that "the legislature shall provide for the utilization, development, and conservation of all natural resources belonging to the State, including land and waters, for the maximum benefit of its people." (Article VIII sections 1 and 2).

Based on Alaska's constitution, LWVAK believes that Alaska residents should be the primary beneficiaries (through availability and lower costs) and indirectly (through investment in the state education, public safety, services).

While Alaskans remain dependent on oil and gas extraction to provide electricity, heat, and vehicle fuel, and to help fund a portion of state government, many Alaskans also rely on subsistence harvest as their primary food source or as a major supplement to their lifestyle. Many other Alaska livelihoods are based on resources that can be profoundly impacted by energy development and operation. The precautionary principle should be applied when developing public policies and regulations, and when evaluating energy sources and projects for Alaska's unique communities and regions.

LWVAK supports the development of non-renewable and renewable energy resources in ways that cause minimal harm to our geosphere, hydrosphere, biosphere, and atmosphere, that:

- Maximizes energy conservation and efficiency
  - In existing homes, and private, commercial and public buildings
  - In all new developments or construction or expansion of existing infrastructure
  - In marine vessels, road vehicles, public transportation systems, rail and aviation
  - By the ongoing revision of State and local uniform building codes to raise energy efficiency standards for new construction
  - By increasing transportation fuel efficiency standards
- Lowers energy development, life-cycle and consumer costs
- Increases power system and power grid resilience and redundancy
  - Through the use of diverse power sources
  - By supporting power system integration programs among local, regional and national stakeholders
  - By recognizing the value of some smaller, community or regional microgrid energy projects (for example, solar, hydrokinetic, wind) that may take less time and funding to develop and may be less vulnerable to disasters

- Supports the development and installation of renewable-source energy systems that
  - Takes advantage of solar, wind, hydrokinetic (river, tidal and wave), and geothermal.
  - Encourages continuing improvement of long duration energy storage.
  - Utilizes bioenergy, provided that the use of each biomass source has been proven by long-term studies not to degrade air quality or the environment
- Reduces emissions and energy-based contributions to climate change
- Urges active research into new energy sources, the improvement of current energy technologies, energy development and consumer costs, and the effects and consequences of energy development and use on the health of the biosphere
- Encourages the development and use of public and private incentive, loan, and funding programs.
- Provides opportunities for public involvement through
  - Open and inclusive permitting processes
  - Public access to ongoing monitoring procedures and reporting
  - Education opportunities
- Promotes public education and sharing of information throughout Alaska and among other circumpolar nations.

LWVAK supports delaying the use or expansion of technologies for which there remain serious disparities between the promised performance and the actual safety and environmental impact record. We urge caution when there is potential for pervasive, profound, or long-lived consequences or irreparable harm to biota, land, water, air, or food (wildlife, fish and marine life, wild plants, and agriculture).

- We oppose the development and use of traditional nuclear energy until secure options exist for plant management, and toxic waste transport, processing and disposal. The development of nuclear microreactor technology may offer safer, more-manageable opportunities.
- Where other alternatives are reasonably available, we do not support the use of coal or the derivatives of coal (e.g., coal bed methane). Where coal or coal derivatives are used, ongoing monitoring of extraction methods, emissions, and upgrading of technology should be carried out to reduce impacts on humans, wildlife, and the environment.

Adopted 1978; revised 1991; 2013; reaffirmed each year since at LWVAK Convention; revised 2025.