



THE SACRAMENTO VOTER

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SACRAMENTO COUNTY

JANUARY 2008

**Speakers Bureau Training
for the Pros and Cons
of the February 2008 State Ballot Measures
will be conducted by Elaine La Rue**

**Saturday, January 12, 2008
9:00-11:30 AM**

The first Pros and Cons training of 2008 will be held at the home of Cheryll Moore, 1910 Chatsworth Lane, Carmichael, CA 95608. Please RSVP to Cheryll at 916-483-5524 by January 9th. If you are interested and cannot attend on this date, please let Cheryll know.

Membership Coffee

**Saturday, January 26, 2008
9:30 to 11:30 AM**

USC State Capitol Center, 1800 I Street, Sacramento 95814

You are invited to our coffee to get acquainted with new and prospective members. This event will include a new member orientation to LWVSC programs and activities as well as time for casual conversation. Feel free to bring a prospective member.

Please RSVP to Ruth Range, (916) 485-9773, so we can provide refreshments for all in attendance.

BOARD MEETING JAN. 14 AT 6:30 PM IN THE LEAGUE OFFICE

2007-2008 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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torretto@pacbell.net

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I would like to call your attention to our recent testimony in support of the City of Sacramento Sustainability Plans. Here is a report from Rick Bettis whose December 18th public comment can be viewed on the Sacramento City Council web site.

At their December 18 meeting the City of Sacramento voted to adopt a Sustainability Plan and a Green Building Plan for the City. The LWVSC testified in support of these Plans and, as documented in the December 2007 Voter, also is serving on a Public Involvement and Personal Responsibility Group that was formed to advise the City on the Sustainability Plan.

The City has signed the national Mayors' Agreement and United Nations Accord on Climate Change and sustainability. The Sustainability Plan provides the policies and action plans needed to meet the greenhouse gas reductions and other resource conservation goals of these agreements. In supporting these Plans the LWVSC offered some suggested actions that would aid in meeting the Plan goals. These comments included:

- Recommended that the City subscribe to the SMUD "Green Energy" program that provides funding dedicated to development of alternative sources of energy that do not result in additional greenhouse gas emissions.
- Suggested that the City accelerate its water conservation program, including water meter installation, since approximately 20 percent of the energy used in our urban area is used for the treatment and pumping of water and wastewater.
- Recommended that the City consider supporting Senate Bill 375, which is discussed in this issue of the Voter.
- Recommended that the City review its solid waste disposal program with consideration of energy use and emissions reductions.
- Suggested that the City use the "Lifecycle" approach to analyzing programs and projects including consideration of increasing the useful life, and reducing maintenance, of buildings and other facilities.

The City plans to adopt an initial "Action Plan" for the Sustainability Plan early in 2008.

REDISTRICTING REFORM INITIATIVE INTRODUCED

By Rick Bettis

On December 3, 2007, LWVSC members joined the League of Women Voters of California (LWVC), California Common Cause, the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, and Governor Schwarzenegger at a Capitol press conference for the introduction of the "Voters FIRST Act" initiative.

Currently legislative district boundaries are redrawn by the Legislature after each ten-year census update. This system has resulted in "gerrymandered" districts that have been configured to protect incumbents and their party selected successors. These "safe" districts have contributed to the widening of partisan disagreements to the detriment of public interest based legislation. It has been a process that essentially allows politicians to choose their voters before the voters can choose among candidates. In the last two elections 99 and 100 percent of the incumbents were reelected in the districts they had drawn for themselves. Allowing incumbent politicians to draw their own districts is a serious conflict of interest.

The "Voters FIRST Act" both amends the California Constitution and creates new statute law as needed to reform the current system. It would establish an independent commission of fourteen including five Democrats, five Republicans, and four small party or independent voters. The commission would be responsible for redrawing the district lines based on non-partisan criteria such as the integrity of counties, cities, neighborhoods, and communities of interest and the geographic compactness of the Districts. The location of the residence of incumbents would not be considered. This reform will make the redistricting process more open, transparent and inclusive.

Common Cause, the AARP, and the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce are sponsoring the initiative. The LWVC has joined the steering committee to qualify and pass this initiative. The Governor and others have offered their support.

To qualify for the November 2008 ballot 694,354 valid signatures must be obtained. Signature gathering will start in January with a target date of mid-April for turning in the petitions. There will be ample opportunities for LWVSC members to participate in this effort. Members will be provided more information on how you can volunteer in the near future. For more information please visit the LWVC web page www.lwvc.org/lwvc/action/redistrict.

SENATOR STEINBERG AUTHORS IMPORTANT LOCAL LAND USE PLANNING LEGISLATION

By Rick Bettis

The LWVSC recently participated in a briefing presented by the Chief Consultant to the California State Senate on Senate Bill 375 authored by Sacramento Senator Darrell Steinberg. This bill would compliment Assembly Bill 1493, passed in 2002, and AB 32, passed in 2006, the landmark greenhouse gas emission reduction Bills authored by former Assemblywoman Fran Pavley. This legislation, to be implemented by the State Air Resources Board, recently suffered a setback when the Federal Environmental Protection Agency issued a ruling blocking California from adopting more restrictive emission standards than those of the Federal government. California Governor Schwarzenegger has stated that the State will file a lawsuit in an attempt to overturn this decision.

SB 375, which has passed in the Senate and is now being considered in the Assembly, would set up a program of incentives for local government jurisdictions who adopt sustainable land use Plans that facilitate increase use of transit and other alternative transportation modes such as walking and biking and would reduce urban sprawl. Implementation of such Plans would result in the reduction of vehicular emissions of greenhouse gases and other pollutants. The Regional Blueprint as adopted by the Sacramento Area Council of Governments meets the criteria proposed for sustainable land use Plans. However, this Blueprint has not been incorporated in all local land use Plans as yet.

Jurisdictions that adopt such sustainable Plans would receive preferential ranking for the allocation of State transportation funding such as is available as the result of the passage of Proposition 1A, the State Transportation Bond, in 2006. These jurisdictions would also be allowed to approve Plans based on a Mitigated Negative Declaration instead of a full Environmental Impact Report as required by the California Environmental Quality Act. This provision would save substantial time and costs associated with Plan approvals.

Governmental agencies concerned with climate change and air quality, many environmental organizations, air quality and transit advocates, and progressive urban planning groups are in support of AB 375. However, the California Building Industry Association along with the California Chamber of Commerce and other business interests are opposing the Bill because they feel it would inhibit land development and harm the economy. Some local governments are concerned that their land use planning authority and flexibility would be reduced, however they have not formally opposed the Bill. The City and County of Sacramento are considering the Bill and have not taken a position as of this time.

WATER FORUM UPDATE, AMERICAN RIVER FLOW STANDARD AND WATER CONSERVATION STILL LAG

By Rick Bettis

The LWVSC has participated as one of the more than forty Water Forum Stakeholders members since the Forum's inception in 1995. In April of 2000 a Memorandum of Understanding was signed by Forum Stakeholders that endorsed a negotiated agreement that was intended to meet the two co-equal goals of the Forum.

“Provide a reliable and safe water supply for the region's economic health and planned development through the year 2030.”

And

“Preserve the fishery, wildlife, recreational, and aesthetic values of the Lower American River.”

The first of these goals is being met with water supply projects completed or being implemented, including the expansion of the City of Sacramento Fairburn Water Diversion and Treatment Plan near California State University, Sacramento.

However the second goal remains unfulfilled and uncertain. Key elements of this goal were Water Conservation Plans agreed to by all the water purveyors in the region, and a minimum Flow Standard for the Lower American River.

The Water Conservation Plans included eighteen Best Management Practices (BMP's) that were estimated to reduce the water use per capita by approximately 25 percent by 2030. These included practices such as water use audits, installation of low water use washers and toilets, and reduction in water required for landscape irrigation. Of the approximately twenty water purveyors only the Placer County Water Agency has met the progress goals for the program. There are ongoing negotiations that could result in some relaxation of program requirements and goals. The primary root cause of this shortcoming appears to be the fact that not all water users have metered services and costs are relatively low, so there is inadequate incentive to conserve water.

It was anticipated that the Flow Standard, which would govern the amount of water released from Folsom and Nimbus Dams, would have been submitted to the California State Water resources control Board for formal adoption by the year 2002. However this submittal has not been made and finalization of the Standard is uncertain due to the many competing demands for the American water. These demands include the local water supply diversions, export of water to users downstream of the Delta by the Federal Bureau of Reclamation, and inflows to the Delta as required by fish and wildlife and to prevent salt-water intrusion from San Francisco Bay. It is now uncertain when and if the goal of the protection of the American River values will be met with certainty.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Jacquelynne Caplan
Kathleen Coban and Bob Rubin (household)

Lanette Davies

Jodie Hale

Julia Mullen

Gail Y. Reed

UNIT MEETINGS: Pros and Cons of the February 2008 ballot

UNIT	DATE & TIME	CONTACT	LOCATION
Mid-City	Monday, Jan. 7 6:15 PM	Doris White 383-0189	8632 Fallbrook Way Sacramento
Morning Suburban	Tuesday, Jan. 8 9:30 A.M.	Mary McCullough 967-7382	2426 Garfield Ave. Carmichael
Greenhaven/ Land Park	Tuesday, Jan. 8	Virginia Moose 446-7149	1312 Robertson Way Sacramento 95831
Elk Grove	Tuesday, Jan. 8 Noon	Pat Justice 391-9439	La Fuente Mexican Restaurant 9631 E. Stockton Blvd. Elk Grove
Eileen Heaser, unit coordinator, 916-456-2154 or eheser@csus.edu			

PLACER COUNTY LEAGUE UPDATE

The League of Women Voters of Placer County is well under way. Here's the list of Board of Directors who are working hard setting up our program for the year.

Kathy Souza, President
 Margie Spalding, First Vice President
 Betty Green-Heffern, Second Vice President
 Candace Massey, Treasurer
 Judy Marston, Secretary
 Daphne Lake, Membership Director
 Alexis Winter, Program Director
 Karen Flemming, Finance Director
 Jean and Sheldon Ebenholz, Newsletter Directors
 Bernedette O'Keefe, Director

Our next general meeting is scheduled for March 12, 2008. Jim McCauley, Placer County Clerk - Recorder - Registrar of Voters, will discuss current issues regarding our election system. Jim has 25 years of experience with election service and has a wealth of information and insight to share. More meeting details will be available in the next Voter.

For more information regarding the new Placer League, please contact Kathy Souza at 916-791-5187 or email the new League at lwvplacer@yahoo.com

JOIN US IN MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK!

Mail this coupon and a check for one year's dues of \$50 to:

League of Women Voters of Sacramento County
 801 12th Street, Suite 210, Sacramento, CA 95814

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____

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Membership is open to all U.S. citizens, 18 years of age or older. Non-citizens and youth under 18 may join as associate members. Membership dues, payable to the LWVSC, are \$50 per year (\$75 for families). Membership dues are not deductible as charitable contributions for tax purposes. Joining the LWVSC makes you a member of all levels of League (local, state, and national).



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF SACRAMENTO COUNTY

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JANUARY 2008

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The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP ONLINE!

www.lwvsacramento.org