



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF WISCONSIN  
EDUCATION FUND**

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February 15, 2010

To: Assembly Special Committee on Clean Energy Jobs

Re: Support of Clean Energy Jobs Act (AB 649)

The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin has long advocated for policies that promise economic prosperity while protecting our state's precious natural resources. Following a two-year study on State Energy Policy, a united League membership in 2007 updated our positions on Global Warming and Electric Energy Policy. Since then we have advocated vigorously for policies that reduce atmospheric CO2 and move Wisconsin toward cleaner sources of energy.

In 2007-2008 League members carefully followed the work of the Governor's Task Force on Global Warming, and our members testified at the hearings. We support the Task Force recommendations knowing they are the result of a thoughtful compromise by a distinguished group of individuals representing diverse interests.

The Clean Energy Jobs Act (CEJA) offers Wisconsin an unprecedented opportunity to move our state through the 21<sup>st</sup> century from a position of economic strength, environmental sustainability, and political leadership. We are in the midst of the worst recession in decades at the same time that we are experiencing rapidly accelerating impacts due to climate change. Tens of thousands of Wisconsin citizens are unemployed, schools and governments are experiencing severe financial stress, and the current effects of climate change right here in Wisconsin are imposing ever increasing burdens on our economy.

There is no doubt that part of the blame for these crises lies with our collective tendency to trade long term benefits for short term gain, our failure to plan for the future. Had we taken the long-term approach in the energy crisis of the 1970's, we would perhaps not be in the predicament we find ourselves today. The CEJA is an opportunity to do it right for the benefit of current and future generations. It will create jobs while it sets Wisconsin on the path to a clean energy economy.

**The CEJA will save money**

Modeling from the Technical Advisory Group of the Governor's Task Force on Global Warming showed that the financial impact of the suite of recommendations in the final report would be to *lower* electric bills across all sectors of our economy, not raise them.

Additional financial benefits of enacting these policies include: the jobs created, the avoided health costs associated with continuing with business as usual, the development of a more diversified portfolio of generation facilities, and, perhaps most importantly, the advantages of having prepared in advance for a carbon-constrained economy.

(more)

### **The CEJA will create jobs in Wisconsin**

We need the Clean Energy Jobs Act to create the jobs of the future. Wisconsin has lost more than 150,000 jobs in the past year or two. This bill will create jobs now and in the future in those industries developing renewable resources as well as in the many businesses involved in implementing energy conservation and efficiency measures. By helping our state prepare now for a carbon-constrained economy, the CEJA will position Wisconsin to be a leader, not a loser.

### **The CEJA will put Wisconsin on the right track to transition to a carbon-constrained world**

Task Force modeling projected that net greenhouse gas emissions in Wisconsin would return to 2005 levels by about 2014 if all modeled policies were adopted and implemented promptly. This is a conservative estimate and, like all modeling, dependent on assumptions about the future, including energy prices. But even allowing for a significant margin of error, the projection underscores the necessity for significant early action. The CEJA will give us an advantageous head start.

### **The CEJA must not be weakened**

In the years since the Governor's Task Force began its work, the news about climate change has gotten worse, not better. The predicted trend towards more severe weather events, including both droughts and floods, is unfolding faster than the climate models have predicted, with dire and expensive consequences even here in Wisconsin.

It is therefore imperative that the CEJA not be weakened. The recommendations of the Task Force are already a compromise position reached by stakeholders representing a wide range of interests. This compromise should be respected as the result of a fair, open and thoughtful process.

In particular, the energy conservation and efficiency goals of 2% of electricity and 1% of natural gas must be firm goals. In addition, energy efficiency measures, while important, should not count towards the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS). To do so would result in less investment in renewable sources of electricity at a time when we must be investing more. We need both strong efficiency measures and a strong RPS.

The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin urges you to show your commitment to future generations by supporting the Clean Energy Jobs Act.