



February 6, 2013

Dear Sovereign Review Team:

The League of Women Voters of Oregon (LWVOR) is pleased to respond to your invitation to submit “broad perspectives on the potential content and direction of the Columbia River Treaty post-2024” for the purpose of informing the remaining stages of the technical analysis and the upcoming preliminary recommendation. The LWVOR maintains and periodically reviews positions on a variety of social, economic and environmental issues. The comments below are drawn from and are supported by these currently-held positions.

Nationally, the League of Women Voters has a fundamental principle to “promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest.” Flowing directly from this overarching principle is the LWVOR position regarding climate change, which specifically states “**global climate change** is one of the most serious threats to the environment, health and economy of our nation. Recent scientific studies show that global warming is already causing environmental changes that will have significant global economic and social impacts. The League believes that now is the time to act on global climate change.”

Therefore, it is critical that the Columbia River Treaty Review Team examine within its technical analysis and include in its upcoming recommendation global climate change, specifically with regard to the potential effects it might have on the Columbia River hydrograph, both its timing and supply. Given that it is unlikely that climate changes can be stopped and given that the exact nature of the changes will be uncertain, it would be prudent to include in any future treaty provisions methods for constructively and flexibly reacting to such changes. For example, climate change may result in lower precipitation and higher temperatures during the winter. This may result in higher winter streamflows, leading to a lesser need for spring flood control, lower spring and summer flows for fish and wildlife, and altered timing for hydroelectric power production. The future treaty may need to be the instrument for effectively managing this or similar future scenarios. This perspective receives our highest relative importance.

The LWVOR also has positions regarding **water policy – quality and quantity**, of which those positions most closely related to Columbia River Treaty categories, include:

- “A. The LWVOR believes that water is a resource that should be managed for the benefit of the public and as sustainable habitat for all life forms. The League supports Oregon state policies and statutes that promote comprehensive long-range planning for conservation and management of ground and surface water and the improvement of water quality. Regulating agencies that govern the protection and conservation of water should be transparent and provide the public easy access to information.
- B. The LWVOR supports management approaches that maximize interagency communication.
- C. The LWVOR believes that the interdependence of land use planning and water planning must be recognized and required at all levels of government.
- D. The LWVOR believes that all planning for ground and surface water should include consideration for both the quality of the water and the availability of water to meet the beneficial uses.
- E. Public involvement should be encouraged throughout the water management and planning processes. The processes should be transparent and include educational components.
- F. The LWVOR acknowledges that all water users must share in the cost of water management.”

The LWVOR believes the technical analysis on a future Columbia River Treaty and any preliminary regional recommendation regarding a new or amended treaty should recognize these water policy positions. They represent a high level of importance.

Finally, the LWVOR has positions regarding the **water resources of the Columbia River**, specifically:

- “A. In order to meet the present and future water needs within the Columbia River Basin, the LWVOR believes comprehensive planning on a basin-wide basis for conservation, development, and management of the water is essential to the optimum use of our water resources. Machinery is needed which will:
1. Provide coordinated planning and administration among federal, state, and other agencies;
  2. Establish a process for resolving conflicts among uses;
  3. Establish procedures, which provide information and an opportunity for citizen participation in policy decisions affecting the directions which water resources development, will take.
- B. The federal government has a necessary role in financing water resources development, but state and local governments and private users should share such costs, as far as possible, based on benefits received and the ability to pay.
- C. The LWVOR believes that wise planning for the use of water in the Columbia River Basin requires an inventory of the water resources within the Basin.
1. This inventory should include all water-related information including:
    - a. ground and surface water sources,
    - b. viable water rights,
    - c. current use, and
    - d. projected future needs.
  2. The inventory should be readily available to concerned agencies and the general public.
- D. The LWVOR also believes that minimum stream flows should be established as a public right and maintained on all streams in the Columbia River Basin.”

The LWVOR believes the technical analysis on a future Columbia River Treaty and any preliminary regional recommendation regarding a new or amended treaty should recognize these water resource positions. They represent a high to moderate level of importance.

Again, we appreciate the opportunity to provide our perspectives and strongly believe that citizen involvement is crucial to effective governance.

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