

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LOS ALAMOS
Positions as revised, March 2009

AFFORDABLE HOUSING (1996; 2003; 2008)

The League of Women Voters Los Alamos supports the development and rehabilitation of affordable housing in the county. LWV Los Alamos believes that affordable housing units should be integrated into neighborhoods throughout Los Alamos County. New developments should have a mix of market-rate and affordable units.

We acknowledge that some type of subsidy by the county is required to achieve affordable prices.

Effective methods to keep these units affordable when they are resold must be in place if we are to retain a stock of affordable housing. For instance, land provided as a subsidy could be retained in a trust.

SUSTAINABILITY (1995, 1997, 2004, 2008)

The League of Women Voters of Los Alamos endorses the concept of a sustainable society as a preamble for all of its current and new positions. A sustainable society may be defined as one in which social and economic justice prevail and that preserves and respects its interdependence with the natural world. It is one that satisfies its own needs without jeopardizing the prospects of future generations. It is a society that protects nature. Communities everywhere would be healthy, safe, caring, and productive places where individuals could be assured of enough pure water, clean air, fertile soil, and sufficient sources of renewable energy to provide for their physical needs. Scarce resources would be equitably distributed so that conflicts over them would be minimized. Each individual would live in dignity with a livable wage. And civil discourse would show that individuals respect one another.

FULLER LODGE (1992, 2004)

The League of Women Voters of Los Alamos believes that Fuller Lodge should be used primarily for civic and cultural activities. Activities not open to the general public should be charged at a rate comparable to that charged by local businesses for equivalent space. Activities open to the general public should be charged at a lower rate.

The County should continue to be responsible for the maintenance, restoration, and protection of the Lodge.

INDIGENT HEALTH CARE FUND (1988, 2004, 2008)

The League of Women Voters of Los Alamos supports the County ordinance establishing the Indigent Health Care Fund. Desirable features of such an ordinance include:

1. A limit for the amount of reimbursement.
2. Provision for changes in this limit because of changing medical costs or demands on the fund.

3. Possible reimbursement of costs beyond hospital and ambulance services.
4. Consideration of for-profit health care providers, but with non-profit facilities given first consideration.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION (1975, 1991, 2004)

The League of Women Voters of Los Alamos believes that public transportation is an essential element of a sustainable society in so far as it conserves natural resources and decreases pollution. Public transportation is also important economically and socially as an alternative to the current norm of one commuter per car. Public transportation can benefit all citizens including workers, students, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. Public transportation should be affordable, convenient and reliable. The County should subsidize and extend the existing system and support the continuation of the regional system.

In order to sustain clean air and healthy ways of living, an emphasis should be placed on developing infrastructure to encourage pedestrians and cyclists. Land use decisions should support this emphasis by promoting higher density mixed-use development.

WATER (2009)

The League of Women Voters of Los Alamos (LWVLA) believes that the goal of our county should be to use no more water than can be produced from our aquifer without depleting it. In order to achieve this goal, decisions about growth must consider water use. Even with the current population in Los Alamos, conservation is essential.

To reduce per capita consumption, we support:

- economic incentives
- codification of standards for all new construction
- encouraging conservation practices for existing homes.

We support the County's efforts to apply water efficiency standards in new construction, to reduce leaks, and to irrigate the parks with wastewater effluent. The Department of Public Utilities (DPU) should educate consumers about best irrigation practices, including how to use gray water, and should provide economic incentives to conserve. Although it might reduce the cost of production, we do not support prescribed watering days as a water conservation measure. We do recommend implementing an inclined block rate ordinance.

Residential conservation and vigilance on the part of the DPU will not suffice to achieve sustainability. The LWVLA advocates:

- requiring growth or development to be compatible with the availability of water for the indefinite future without requiring the diversion of the San Juan-Chama water
- careful monitoring and continuing study of the aquifer
- increased efforts by the County to participate in and assure that regional and state plans are sustainable
- engaging the public in the water budget process.

The LWVLA believes that diversion of the San Juan-Chama water should be a last resort because of its high cost and also the potential damage to White Rock Canyon. However, we realize that, despite the best efforts of the County and residents, the viability of the aquifer may be at risk. San Juan-Chama water should be reserved for future emergencies that may be caused by drought and/or contamination. The County should explore ways to maintain its quota of San Juan-Chama water for this purpose. LWVLA recommends that any plans for diversion be designed to minimize the impact on White Rock Canyon.

For the sake of the public welfare, the County should be guided in all decisions by the following policies.

- Encourage conservation and efficiency of use.
- Promote local and regional food security.
- Preserve riparian ecosystems and wetlands.
- Preserve public lands, water, and open space.