

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT
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The New York State League of Women Voters Committee on Energy, Agriculture and the Environment (formerly called the Hydraulic Fracturing Committee; hereinafter the "Committee") embraces the LWV US goal to reverse the progress of global warming and has expanded its scope to incorporate the inter-relationship between and among energy choices, use of natural resources, how we grow our food and resulting environmental impacts, such as those which result from pollution and extreme weather events. Learning to adapt to these changes is essential as we simultaneously aspire to reverse adverse impacts.

Over the last several years the issue relating to the proposed presence in New York and expansion elsewhere of the lifecycle associated with high volume hydraulic fracturing combined with horizontal drilling ("high volume gas drilling") has been a pressing issue so a substantial amount of our efforts have been focused on that topic. This includes educational forums and in 2014 commissioning a study by petroleum geologist Arthur Berman and petroleum engineer Lyndon Pittinger on the economically recoverable shale gas in New York State which we sent to Governor Cuomo and DEC Commissioner Martens. In December 2014, Governor Cuomo announced that based on the results of a health assessment that had been performed by the New York State Department of Health, influence from economic indicators and the overwhelming input from citizens, New York State will not issue permits for high volume gas drilling in New York State. We consider this a successful outcome to our long-term efforts.

The Committee has continued to review and comment on proposed legislation, responds to questions from members and the public and shares with League members across the state and the United States information relevant to high volume gas drilling, and ways to take action, such as writing to elected officials.

New York State continues to accept waste from out of state high volume gas drilling operations. In addition, pipeline expansion, gas storage and train transport of oil through New York present formidable challenges which we have taken action to address. The League was also active in communicating to Governor Cuomo concerns about placement of a proposed LNG facility off the shores of New York City; in 2015 the Governor decided against permitting the facility. Westchester Committee members have been focused on the proposed Algonquin pipeline expansion near the nuclear power plant located at Indian Point. This includes testifying at various municipal hearings. League members have focused as well on preventing the expansion of a gas storage facility near Seneca Lake and been involved at a municipal level with the passage of local laws prohibiting the acceptance from out of state of the hazardous frack waste into our waste treatment facilities, our landfills or for road spreading to melt ice or control dust, as this unregulated material ends up in the very water supplies we seek to protect.

In addition to the Committee's work on gas drilling and its ripple effects, for the past few years we have placed increasing emphasis on the role of renewable energy and sustainable options which address the impacts of a warming climate. Committee members throughout the state have been focused on renewable energy options such as solar energy. The Committee has also undertaken research which includes development of a revised grid system which makes sourcing renewable energy more democratic. Our work also includes ongoing initiatives to make community living more sustainable and resilient through energy choices, conservation and waste management.