

Go Green Illinois, July 9, 2019

Environmental Policy

Speaker: Krista Grimm, Water issues specialist of LWV of IL and President of LWV Lake Michigan region kristamgrimm@gmail.com

League of Women Voters is an organization that is very place based. They work on projects relevant to their communities and based on what members are interested in. They also advocate at the local level on municipal and local matters and educate the public about policy matters. LWV operates in four general areas:

1. International relations
2. Governance issues – voter registration and redistricting
3. Natural Resources
 - Climate change - air
 - Climate change - energy
 - Fracking
 - Sustainable food and water
 - Water
4. Social Policies – Gun violence, reproductive health, immigration

LWV was very effective in helping to pass the ERA because they have so many chapters through out the state. LWV also worked on the coal tar ban issues.

LWV's goal is to have better educated voters. Local leagues can contribute to setting agenda for state, regional and national level.

Example of local action: LWV of Jo Daviess County: The County had no water management program. LWV members began a community dialogue and did a watershed tour and water testing. They then developed a Watershed-Based Plan and have received \$100,000 in federal grants.

LWV National works on a federal level:

- Leads advocacy on federal issues
- Climate Change is a priority issue
- Issues Action Alerts
- Lobbies Congress and Federal Agencies.

Speaker: Jen Walling, Executive Director of the Illinois Environmental Council jwalling@ilenviro.org www.ilenviro.org

Formed in 1975 to become the eyes, ears and voice of the environmental community in Springfield, IEC has 100 member communities. They focus on state legislation, but are also working with the City of Chicago and expanding to do some draft ordinances. IEC is a bipartisan organization.

Springfield Update: State government is very important to environmental protection. This has been one of the busiest legislation sessions in recent history. Introduced over 70 bills that IEC wrote. Of those, over 20 passed this past year. (See IEC website for details.)

Pritzker has focused on the environment from before he was governor. Newly elected lawmakers came with more environmental knowledge and focus.

Clean Energy Jobs Act – This bill is stalled. Much discussion needed. Other priorities came first, but this should be a priority in the next year or two.

Oct. 29 Environmental Lobby Day (details at ilenviro.org)

They were able to roll back a 1998 Kyoto Protocol Act that restricted the state's ability to pass laws more restrictive than Federal standards. As a result, they might be able to work on state-level clean car standards.

Passed law on coal ash. Stopped a bill that would have made pipeline protests illegal. Illinois' cannabis bill includes environmental provisions to ensure that it is grown sustainably. Still working on rebates for EV charging infrastructure, agriculture issues, a plastic bag fee, and lead pipes and water infrastructure. We have 1/8 of the lead service lines in the nation! Open space funding was ok, but we need more open space champions in the legislature. IEC is working on educating legislators about the importance of open space. Good new Director of IDNR. IEPA was reduced from 900 employees to 600+ employees under the Rauner administration. It will take years to catch up.

Bad News: There is a new fee on the electric vehicles, took away the discount for EV licenses.

Increased gas tax will help for road infrastructure. The law was not as supportive of public transport as they hoped.

Food scrap issues: we need to build up infrastructure for commercial composting and develop a market for the use of compost in large projects. IEC has model ordinances for this that we can bring to our communities.

IEC creates a scorecard of state lawmakers. They have just purchased a building in Springfield and will be installing solar to cover 50% of their energy use. They are working on a grey water system and pollinator plantings.

Go to ilenviro.org for information about membership for yourself or your organization.

Action requested: International Energy Conservation Code - Kim Stone

Kim summarized the importance of the upcoming vote on the International Energy Conservation Code (IECC), and requested that all GGIL Members work to get their municipality and county to vote for energy efficiency improvements to

put us on a path to net zero by 2050. The IECC is updated every 3 years and then adopted by the state and municipalities. Last time the code was updated, approximately 500 votes were cast. Municipalities are allocated votes based on population, for example Highland Park has 4 votes and Evanston has 8. Most voters are builders and developers whose objective is to build as cheaply as possible. They have introduced changes that would take us backwards in terms of efficiency. For example, there is a proposal to reduce the amount of insulation required in buildings as HVAC systems have become more efficient. If all municipalities voted the recommendations provided by the Energy Efficient Codes Council, we could put the IECC on a path to net zero by 2050.

This is an action that takes relatively little time and money, but could have an enormous impact on energy efficiency and greenhouse gas emissions. Sept. 23rd is the deadline for municipalities to designate who will vote. The vote is in November and is online. Contact Kim if you have any questions. Her notes are below and can be pasted and used in communication with your City Council/Village Board members and City/Village Manager. You can also use this fact sheet for your Mayor: <https://energyefficientcodes.org/wp-content/uploads/2019-03-13-Mayors-Fact-Sheet-and-Checklist-FIN.pdf>.

The International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) is one of several codes written by the International Code Council. Every 3 years, the International Code Council (ICC) solicits input to modernize America's Model Energy Code (IECC). During the last cycle, only .5% of the local government officials in the US that are eligible to vote exercised their option to do so, and the potential benefits of new energy efficient buildings was lost. Due to the importance of the municipal voice, the US Conference of Mayors passed a resolution, urging, "*mayors from around the nation to ... to unite and maximize local government support for putting America's Model Building Energy Code, the IECC, on a glide path of steady progress toward net zero building construction by 2050.*"

The IECC will set efficiency requirements for newly constructed and renovated building that will provide energy savings and emissions reductions over the life spans of buildings. Well-crafted, robust building energy codes can bring benefits to building owners; support local and global environmental objectives. This IECC code is very important because:

- Buildings use 40% of the nation's energy and account for 50% of the greenhouse gas emissions in our region;
- Cost saving are enjoyed by building owners and occupants over the long-term. A report (*Focused Acceleration*) commissioned by C40 Cities noted that building energy

efficiency generates utility bill savings that exceed and rapidly recoup their costs; averaging from \$4,763 to \$33,105 (depending on climate zone); and

- The National Renewable Energy Lab (NREL) identified building energy codes as the most impactful policy action cities can take to meet greenhouse gas reduction targets and the *Focused Acceleration* report underscores the value of optimizing building energy efficiency as the most *significant and impactful step cities can take to meet Paris Accord GHG emission targets*.

The International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) is being updated now and municipalities can have an important role in how these codes deliver benefits for residents, communities, and the environment. **A national campaign to engage municipal leaders in supporting America's Model Energy Code is being led by the Energy Efficient Codes Council (EECC) and endorsed by the US Conference of Mayors.**

Members must designate 4 people (staff and/or elected officials) to cast these votes by September 23, 2019. Actual voting occurs in mid-November, 2019. The EECC has a helpful guide and timeline for municipal participation at: <https://energyefficientcodes.org/> . Information is also at <https://www.gogreenillinois.org/building-codes-matter-for-energy-efficiency/> with links to some of the resources noted above.

Carbon Pricing by Dave Holmquist

Member of Go Green Oak Park and Citizens Climate Lobby.
Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act, The Bipartisan Climate solution H.R #763. Expecting a Senate version shortly.

This is a carbon fee & dividend bill that would put a fee on fossil fuels to drive down consumption and increase investment in more efficient energy use. The transition would create jobs (estimated at 2 million). The bill is revenue neutral and revenue would be allocated to people rather than spent by the government. To get bipartisan support, the bill includes a provision to roll back the EPA's ability to regulate carbon.

There is a separate proposal by the Climate Leadership Council for a carbon fee, but it promotes fossil fuels.

Dave will give a longer presentation on this bill at our September meeting.