

Summary of the Local Positions of the League of Women Voters of La Plata County

Desert Rock Energy Project (adopted September 11, 2007)

The LWV of La Plata County joins with the LWV of Cortez-Montezuma County in opposing the Desert Rock Energy Project unless and until the Environmental Impact Statement is amended to include a fourth alternative, which commits the BIA and Sithe Global Power LLC to a package of emissions reductions. In addition, we urge the Tribal Council and the Bureau of Indian Affairs to provide for sequestration of greenhouse gases at all future coal-fired power plants on tribal lands and to explore the use of their solar and wind energy resources for energy production.

Library Bond Issue (adopted May 11, 2007)

The League of Women Voters of La Plata County supports Referred Measure 2A, the City of Durango Ballot Library Question referred to City of Durango voters in the November 2006 election to authorize issuance of bonds for the construction of the new library facility.

Concerning the site acquisition and construction of the new library facility, the League of Women Voters of La Plata County strongly urges the City of Durango to endorse and abide by the several criteria including compliance with the LEED green building rating standards concerning energy and environmental design;

Health Service District (adopted May 13, 2006)

The League of Women Voters of La Plata County supports the proposed La Plata County Health Service District.

Vote Center Concept and Its Applicability to La Plata County (adopted May 13, 2006)

The League of Women Voters of La Plata County supports the concept of vote centers, which we believe has the potential of increasing citizen participation in the political process by making voting easier, if and when all of several conditions are met, including cost effectiveness, user-friendly design, implementation of enabling technical requirements such as security and connectivity, and training and monitoring capabilities.

Affordable Housing (adopted May, 2004)

The LWV believes that La Plata County should strive to be a 'mixed community', defined as a community where individuals and families of all income levels, ethnicities and age groups live together within a reasonable distance of their workplaces and community services. To achieve and maintain this goal, an adequate amount of affordable rental and owner-occupied housing must be available. The burden of providing such housing should be shared by the community at large. A variety of incentives and requirements should be used by local governments to encourage affordable housing dispersed throughout the community. The LWV supports the creation of a regional housing authority.

The remaining positions were pulled from the archives and reaffirmed in May, 2004 with minor rewording

La Plata County School Districts Educational Policy

Part I - Program and Building Needs

The LWV believes that the educational program should be defined first by teachers, students, administration and citizenry, approved by the local board of education, and then buildings designed to accommodate that educational program. A school program should include [in addition to state-mandated requirements]: a strong career and technical program; a comprehensive physical education program, including health education; and a comprehensive fine arts program. Adequate custodial and maintenance funding should be provided and joint use of school facilities by the city and county should be encouraged.

Part II – Accountability

The LWV believes school districts should be held accountable to the public for use of tax dollars and for the education provided to students. Such accountability can be encouraged by: promoting public participation in school decision-making; assuring reasonable accessibility of staff and

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board members; regular, formalized opportunities for community to communicate with staff and board; and yearly progress reports to the community.

Durango City Government

The LWV endorses the current council-manager form of government for Durango with modifications in the following areas:

- Full financial disclosure:
Positions on the finance committee should be adequately advertised and composition staggered. The annual budget with a clear summary should be made available for public review a month before adoption. Periodic status reports should be available to the public at City Hall. Auditors, selected locally, should be changed frequently.
- Inter-governmental cooperation should be encouraged.
- Citizen information: Meetings of council and boards should be adequately publicized. Coverage by the press should be encouraged.
- Citizen participation: a consistent set of requirements for selecting members of committees should be established; open positions should be widely publicized. The same people serving on multiple committees should be discouraged.
- Council members: salaries of councilpersons should be kept commensurate with salaries of councilpersons in similar towns.

Comprehensive Planning

The LWV supports a comprehensive plan for Durango and for La Plata County that is responsive to the will of the people and subject to annual review. The plan should allow for orderly development, recognize the natural beauty and preserve it, centralize new industry, provide recreational paths, provide for affordable housing, discourage sprawl and strip development, encourage cluster development, explore ways to make growth pay for itself, create a more viable downtown, address parking and traffic issues.

County Home Rule

The LWV supports the concept of county home rule for La Plata County in the interest of efficiency and effectiveness.

(The position statement is quite brief; and review of the archives produced no expanded position statement. A booklet on Home Rule of La Plata County was put together by the LWV in February, 1974 and it contains several good consensus questions, but no LWV answers to them.)