



Testimony submitted to the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and
Energy

In support of S.1821 An Act combating climate change and H.1726 An Act to Promote
Green Infrastructure, Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Create Jobs

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The national League of Women Voters (LWVUS) has been a strong advocate of efforts to protect natural resources since the 1960s, expanding its focus to include the relationship between greenhouse gas emissions and climate change in keeping with the emerging science on this issue. The League advocates for meaningful legislation to address climate change as a function of good governance, working for the public welfare through the democratic process.

In a comprehensive [report](#)¹ issued by the LWVUS Climate Change Task Force in 2009, a carefully-designed carbon fee or tax is identified as a key strategy for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. LWVUS supports carbon pricing implemented through carbon fee and rebate systems that are revenue-neutral or revenue-positive, and through cap-and-trade approaches, as long as low- and middle-income households receive adequate rebates, tax cuts or other supports to protect them from financial impacts, and protections are put in place for vulnerable businesses.

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts supported the original carbon pricing bill submitted by Senator Barrett and former Representative Conroy in 2013 and Senator Barrett's 2015 bill. We enthusiastically support his current revenue-neutral bill, S.1821. This session, consistent with League support of the range of viable carbon pricing approaches, we also enthusiastically support H.1726, a revenue-positive carbon pricing bill submitted by Representative Benson.

We applaud the bicameral effort and opportunity represented by these bills, each employing a different pricing approach, but both aiming at and able to achieve the same critical outcomes:

- reducing climate-changing greenhouse gas emissions;
- protecting vulnerable residents and businesses;
- stimulating the state's economy by keeping energy dollars within Massachusetts and through growth in the technology, innovation and renewable energy sectors;
- promoting renewable energy jobs and businesses;
- advancing the transition to a renewable energy future for a habitable world.

¹ Cap-and-Trade Versus Carbon Tax: Two Approaches to Curbing Greenhouse Gas Emissions. LWVUS report: <http://lww.org/content/cap-and-trade-versus-carbon-tax-two-approaches-curbing-greenhouse-gas-emissions>. Accessed June 15, 2017.

The evidence is in and the debate is over regarding the reality, impact and causes of climate change. Numerous economists, scientists, and political leaders on [different sides of the political spectrum](#)² agree that carbon pricing is the surest and simplest immediate tool for significantly reducing carbon dioxide emissions in the near term, while supporting the transition to clean, renewable energy sources and a clean energy economy. Additionally, the success of carbon pricing through the experience of other countries and of British Columbia offers a significant demonstration of carbon pricing's immediate and longer-range effectiveness.

The evidence is also clear that in the United States, at this time, leadership must come from the states. The League deeply appreciates and thanks Governor Baker for his decision to join the newly formed, multi-state [Climate Alliance](#)³ as a sign of his commitment to collaborate with other state leaders to adhere to the targets and objectives outlined in the 2016 Paris Accord.

Massachusetts was ahead of the curve as the first state in the nation to introduce carbon pricing legislation with a bill submitted in 2013. Massachusetts now has the opportunity to not only maintain its position as a leader among states on the critical issue of addressing climate change, but to achieve even higher leadership status by providing a model of how to lead through clear vision supported by bold and responsible action.

There are no silver bullets when it comes to complex issues such as climate change, but some actions are key to changing a trajectory. Putting a price on carbon is rightfully viewed as a “top tier” strategy for combatting climate change while safeguarding the economy – a foundational element that exerts immediate impact when adopted and can be built upon to support the shift to a decarbonized, livable planet.

LWVMA urges you to give carbon pricing legislation a favorable report and work to assure passage of strong and meaningful carbon pricing legislation this session.

Thank you for your consideration.

² *'A Conservative Climate Solution': Republican Group Calls for Carbon Tax*. New York Times, 2/7/2017.: https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/07/science/a-conservative-climate-solution-republican-group-calls-for-carbon-tax.html?_r=1. Accessed June 15, 2017.

³ States step into void left by exit from Paris climate accord. Public Broadcasting System, June 2, 2017: <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/rundown/states-step-void-left-exit-paris-climate-accord/>. Accessed June 15, 2017.