



Testimony submitted to the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy
In support of H. 2810 An Act to promote green infrastructure and reduce carbon emissions
and

S.1924 An Act to combat climate change

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The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts has supported carbon pricing bills since 2013 and extends its full support to carbon pricing bills and policies this session. The League values carbon pricing as a uniquely effective means of reducing the carbon pollution that is devastating our ecosystem and adversely affecting the health of millions of people. A comprehensive report issued by the LWVUS Climate Change Task Force in 2009¹ concluded that a carefully designed carbon fee or tax is a critical strategy for reducing dangerous greenhouse gas emissions.

There are no silver bullets to address the climate crisis, but there is “silver buckshot.”² Carbon pricing alone will not get us where we need to go in reducing emissions, but it is a major strategy that must be part of the mix of climate solutions.³

The League does not take a position on carbon pricing revenue generation or use, supporting plans that are revenue-neutral or revenue-positive, including cap-and-trade approaches with appropriate caps on emissions. The League also believes that related legislation and regulatory policy should include specific acknowledgement, consideration and protections for low- and middle-income households and businesses most heavily impacted by climate change and carbon pricing policy.

The League supports the Baker Administration’s active participation and leadership role in the Transportation and Climate Initiative (TCI) as a means of reducing emissions from the transportation sector, the largest source of carbon emissions in our state. But we must also recognize the need to address growing emissions from the building sector resulting from heating and cooling of buildings and industry. To be truly effective at the scale necessary, particularly at this point in the climate crisis, carbon pricing needs to be applied economy-wide.

H.2810 and S.1924 are consistent with LWVUS positions on the environment and energy.
We know from the experience of other countries that putting a price on carbon provides cost

¹ <http://salsa.wiredforchange.com/o/5950/c/9217/images/Cap-and-Trade--Carbon%20Tax.pdf>

² "Global warming is a wicked problem for which there is no silver bullet. But there is silver buckshot."

Richard Sommerville, Scripps

³ *Climate change policy can be overwhelming. Here’s a guide to the policies that work.* Vox interview with David Roberts and Hal Harvey, January 24 2019: <https://www.vox.com/energy-and-environment/2018/11/16/18096352/climate-change-clean-energy-policies-guide>. Accessed January 10, 2020.



incentives for producers to reduce emissions, sends a market signal to transition to renewable energy, and moves consumers to reduce energy consumption through energy efficiency and other measures.

The science is settled regarding carbon dioxide and other potent greenhouse gases as a primary source of anthropomorphic global warming. Climate change is not a future event. We see its signs all around us, from changes in growing seasons, increased droughts and flooding, uncontrollable wild fires, a steady succession of mega-storms, and extinction of hundreds of thousands of creatures and plant life that populate our earth, so essential to supporting a vital web of interdependence. These realities disrupt millions of lives and are already costing billions in repair and rebuilding of infrastructure, homes, and entire communities. The economic and human costs of the unfolding climate catastrophe will continue to mount.^{4 5}

The window for effective action to address climate change is closing fast and will require a concerted and massive effort to curtail the most devastating outcomes.

Massachusetts has established itself as a national leader on environmental matters and innovation through a variety of regulatory policies and legislation aimed at promoting energy efficiency and the development of clean, renewable energy. Passage of a well-crafted, economy-wide carbon pricing plan, in combination with other policies, opens the door to a healthier society resulting from cleaner air and water and a stronger economy as our investment in the transition to clean, renewable energy takes hold.

Passage of strong carbon pricing legislation this session will set a model for other states and secure Massachusetts' position in the country and beyond as a leader in addressing the climate crisis. Key design elements include:

- updating the Global Warming Solutions Act's 2050 limit to the new global standard: net zero greenhouse gas emissions.
- gradual, but steadily rising cost per ton of carbon dioxide emissions for carbon pricing systems and a gradual, steadily declining cap in emissions for cap-and-trade programs to achieve mandated greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets;
- robust monitoring and assessment of results to ensure that approaches are working to meet mandated, updated reduction goals;

⁴ *Climate change has cost the government \$350 billion — here's what it will cost you.* Karl Paul, Market Watch, 11/26/2018: <https://www.marketwatch.com/story/6-ways-to-prepare-your-finances-for-climate-change-2016-12-20>. Accessed 1/10/2020

⁵ *Climate change could cost the U.S. economy hundreds of billions a year by 2090.* Dana Nuccitelli, 4/29/2019; <https://www.yaleclimateconnections.org/2019/04/climate-change-could-cost-u-s-economy-billions/>. Accessed 1/10/2020.



- provisions to protect those most vulnerable to climate change and the cost impact of carbon pricing policies.

A planet is a terrible thing to waste. The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts, representing 47 local Leagues from Cape Cod to the Berkshires, urges you to act at full speed to move strong carbon pricing legislation this session.