

Four League Position on Solid Waste

Members of the League of Women Voters in Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga and Schenectady Counties agree that the wise management of natural resources respects the interrelationship of land use, water resources, air quality, energy use and waste management.

We support waste and toxicity reduction and environmentally sound methods of recycling and reuse as the primary forms of solid waste management. Programs supporting reduction, recycling and reuse should be given policy and funding priority.

Waste management policies and funding priorities should recognize that many materials which are usually discarded as solid waste are in actuality resources having value; should promote the conservation of primary resources and the extensive reuse, recycling and recovery of manufactured and processed materials; should reduce the toxicity of materials entering the waste stream; and should assure the safe containment of unusable or toxic residues that may remain.

Therefore, the four Leagues support solid waste policies that:

- protect human health and safety;
- promote the wise management of natural resources, including land, wildlife and habitat, water, air and atmosphere, energy and materials;
- promote the conservation of primary materials such as timber, minerals, ores and energy;
- promote the extensive reuse and recycling of secondary materials;
- minimize the effects of hazardous materials in the waste stream;
- make it as easy as possible for people to use legal and responsible waste disposal methods; and
- encourage communities to take responsibility for recycling and waste disposal by locating needed facilities within their boundaries and by cooperating with other communities in the management of solid waste.

At every stage of reduction, reuse, recycling, recovery and disposal, the positive and negative impact on the following must be considered:

- public health
- financing
- regulatory provisions
- air and water quality
- land and water resources
- noise levels
- transportation and infrastructure
- economic factors
- energy use
- waste residue
- visual aesthetics

Solid waste management methods should be determined by town, city, or county governments, or by a regional or intermunicipal authority. Federal or State government standards should be considered minimal. The five Leagues support direct involvement by citizens and local governments at all stages of planning, development operation and monitoring of all solid waste management plans and projects.

Construction of solid waste facilities may be financed by various methods, including bonding, grants, waste generator fees, and private funding. Operating costs should be funded primarily by waste generator fees, sale of recycled materials, fines and penalties, and to a lesser degree by public monies. Standards for operation of solid waste management facilities should be established and enforced by the public sector, whether actual operations are conducted by private or public entities.

Approved: October, 1991