



League of Women Voters of the Bay Area



VOTER
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* CALL TO COUNCIL

LWVBA Council Saturday, May 21, 2011, 10 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.,
San Francisco Main Library (at BART Civic Center station).

The Council shall be composed of the directors of the LWVBA and two delegates from each local League, other non-voting members may also attend at the per League cost.

The Council shall give guidance to the board on program, methods of operation and budget as submitted by the board. The Council will adopt a budget for the fiscal year.

Registration: \$10 per League (no extra charge for additional attendees.)

Payment MUST be made in advance: please send a \$10 check per League payable to LWVBA to: Christine Wise, 148 Best Avenue, San Leandro, CA 94577.

Please make reservations by Friday, May 13, 2011.

* A BAY AREA PLAN

An integrated land use and transportation plan for the whole Bay Area is being produced with four agencies "collaborating at an unprecedented level." These

agencies—Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD), and the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC)—are working with their “equal partners” in the nine counties and 101 cities and towns in the region.

This is an opportunity for every local League to get involved, help educate the public, and monitor the planning process. Workshops in each county will take place in April and May. Find your workshop from the list below and join the process to plan the future of the Bay Area in a way that will achieve our greenhouse gas reduction targets. There will be an opportunity to participate in interactive computer modeling with various scenarios. Space at these workshops is limited; register early.

Linda Craig, LWVBA Board

Santa Clara County*

Thursday, April 21, 2011, 5:30-8:30 p.m., Microsoft Corporation, 1065 La Avenida Street, Mountain View [Register](#)

San Francisco County

Monday, April 25, 2011, 5:30-8:30 p.m., Milton Marks Conference Center, 455 Golden Gate Avenue, San Francisco [Register](#)

San Mateo County*

Wednesday, April 27, 2011, 5:30-8:30 p.m., San Mateo Public Library, 55 West 3rd Street, San Mateo [Register](#)

Napa County

Thursday, April 28, 2011, 5:30-8:30 p.m., Elks Lodge, 2840 Soscol Avenue, Napa [Register](#)

Solano County

Wednesday, May 4, 2011, 5:30-8:30 p.m., Solano County Events Center, 601 Texas Street, Conference Room A, Fairfield (Entrance on Union Avenue side) [Register](#)

Contra Costa County*

Saturday, May 7, 2011, 9 a.m.-12 p.m., Concord Senior Center, 2727 Parkside Circle, Concord [Register](#)

Marin County

Wednesday, May 11, 2011, 5:30-8:30 p.m., Embassy Suites Hotel, 101 McInnis Parkway, San Rafael [Register](#)

Sonoma County*

Wednesday, May 18, 2011, 5:30-8:30 p.m., The Glaser Center, 547 Mendocino

Avenue, Santa Rosa [Register](#)

Alameda County*

Thursday, May 19, 2011, 5:30-8:30 p.m., David Brower Center, 2150 Allston Way, Berkeley [Register](#)

*Meeting cosponsored with Envision Bay Area, a group of nonprofits who are working to promote public participation on Plan Bay Area.

For more information see http://www.onebayarea.org/plan_bay_area/

*** AIR QUALITY GUIDELINES**

Local Leagues have an opportunity to monitor local land use plans and projects, especially infill and affordable housing projects, to assure that people living and working there will have a healthful environment. This is because new voluntary Air Quality Guidelines are available.

Recently, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District updated its CEQA Air Quality Guidelines to respond to new federal and state air pollution standards and to add additional air pollutants not previously addressed.. The Guidelines aid planners and decision makers in developing projects and plans that comply with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). An important part of the Guidelines is the Thresholds of Significance, which state the amount of each pollutant that can be emitted by a project or plan without being termed "significant." A plan or project with significant adverse impacts must go through the CEQA process, which includes preparing an Environmental Impact Report that includes mitigation of those impacts.

The Air District has conducted a neighborhood-by-neighborhood evaluation of the levels of toxic air contaminants, especially diesel soot, and has identified communities and neighborhoods with unhealthy levels of air toxics. Consequently, the risks and hazards of air toxics are included in the Thresholds of Significance of the Guidelines. Nearly every city and town has heavily traveled freeways and thoroughfares and industries that emit air toxics. Also included are reductions in greenhouse gas emissions that reflect the requirements of AB 32.

The Air District offers technical assistance, resources and tools to aid in developing projects and plans that comply with the CEQA Guidelines. The March/April issue of the Bay Area Monitor contains more about the public workshops on the Guidelines held by the Air District.

Dee Sabiston (LWV Board)

* BAY AREA LEAGUE DAY REPORT

A full report on the January 2011 Bay Area League Day appears in the Bay Area Monitor, March-April issue available at <http://www.bayareamonitor.org/>

* TRANSPORTATION ACTION

LWVBA recently joined 23 Bay Area environmental and public interest groups in supporting a forward-looking proposal by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) to re-evaluate its commitments to many new transportation projects in light of regional goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, promote public health, and equitably meet the needs of a broad range of residents.

The committed projects to be reconsidered are part of the 25-year Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), adopted in 2009, that allocates \$218 billion to transportation projects around the region, a formidable amount that in the past has largely been used to fund previous commitments, with a disappointingly small portion left to meet new needs and challenges. Should the MTC proposal be implemented in the next update of the RTP, which is now in progress, the impact could be profound. MTC's priorities could more aggressively favor increased transit use, biking, and walking, and funds could be directed to encourage local governments to site new housing developments near transportation and jobs.

This new approach to planning the RTP is needed if we are to respond effectively to the challenges of climate change.. Local leagues and individuals can help encourage the Commissioners to support the reconsideration by writing, e-mailing, or speaking to their MTC representatives: a list is available at www.mtc.ca.gov. Please ask that they support Option # 2 because it includes in the re-evaluation all projects with regional funding that are not actually under construction. Option #1 exempts more projects from the analyses than does #2. The full text of the letter, including the names of endorsing organizations, is posted on our website, www.lwvbayarea.org. Click on "Advocacy," and then "Letters." You may also enjoy reading more of our recent letters to public officials that are posted on this site.

Mim Hawley, LWVBA Board

* WATER ACIDIFICATION FROM CO₂

THE OTHER (MAYBE WORSE) PROBLEM FROM RISING CO₂

Concern about the rising concentration of CO₂ has been focused on its greenhouse effect for which the results can be easily observed around us. However, there is another effect which is not visible to most of us; about 1/3 to

1/2 of the CO₂ which has been added to the atmosphere since the dawn of the industrial age has dissolved in the ocean, turning the ocean more acid. The results of the change in ocean chemistry are currently being studied but decreased calcification has been observed in corals already. Additional understanding of the effects of the acidification are being elucidated through experimental exposure of marine organisms to the lower pH (which results from the increase in dissolved CO₂). These experiments indicate that many organisms which rely on calcification for shells or structure will not thrive or will not survive in the pH which is predicted in the near future. These organisms include, beside the corals, many of the single cell algae which are the bottom of the food chain, coralline algae and some larger animals. Also, the larvae of some animals have been found to be very sensitive to pH and are likely not to survive.

It is not really known what the results will be of removing these organisms from the ocean ecology but there is very serious concern that it will dramatically reduce the life in the ocean.

While there are many climate change doubters, the effect of increasing CO₂ is directly measurable, has already changed faster than was predicted, is increasing at an alarming rate and threatens to directly decrease available food worldwide. Critically also, a large percentage of the oxygen we breath is released from CO₂ by algae in the ocean (just as green plants do on land). The changing ocean chemistry must be as prominent for the public as is the changing climate.

Annette McCoubrey (LWV Diablo Valley)

Yes, we have had a lot of rain but we still need to SAVE WATER!

