

**CLIMATE CHANGE ACTIVITIES**  
**AT LWVUS NATIONAL CONVENTION 2016**  
*Washington, DC*

On June 17 members of Leagues from Delaware, California, Illinois and Massachusetts held a caucus called **Promoting a Price on Carbon**. Chad Tolman spoke about the Delaware Price on Carbon Study that is now underway, and the others spoke about League actions to put a price on carbon dioxide emissions in other states and countries around the world. Linda Swift (California), who is also a member of the Delaware study, has developed a [Price on Carbon](#) website that has been endorsed by LWVUS. Check it out to learn more. The Delaware League led a successful effort to pass a resolution supporting a price on carbon at Convention 2014., and we will now be working with other Leagues across the country to help them promote carbon pricing in their areas as an important tool for mitigating climate change.

On June 19 the delegates nearly unanimously passed the following three resolutions proposed by the Oregon League:

- Therefore be it resolved, the LWVUS consider signing onto an Amicus Brief with the 21 youth plaintiffs from Our Children's Trust.
- Therefore be it resolved, LWVUS support the United States ratification of the UN COP 21 Paris Agreement.
- Therefore be it resolved, that the LWVUS continue working for full implementation of the EPA Clean Power Plan, especially at the state level, as a first step, and should call on the White House to implement an updated science-based Climate Action Plan that stabilizes global warming by bringing CO2 levels down to no more than 350 ppm by 2100.

**NOTES:** [Our Children's Trust](#) is a legal effort on the part of young people to sue the federal government "for violating their constitutional rights to life, liberty and property, and their right to essential public trust resources by permitting, encouraging, and otherwise enabling continued exploitation, production and combustion of fossil fuels."

[COP 21](#) is the 21st Conference of the Parties, meeting in Paris in 2015, following the 1st meeting at Rio de Janeiro in 1992, which adopted the UN

Framework on Climate Change. The Framework aimed to stabilize atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases (GHGs) to avoid “dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system,” but involved no commitments or time tables. The Paris agreement included both.

The EPA [Clean Power Plan](#) aims to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from U.S. power plants - the major source of U.S. carbon emissions - and is the keystone of President Obama’s plan to meet the U.S. obligation to reduce emissions 26-28% under the Paris agreement.

The president’s [Climate Action Plan](#), announced in 2013, includes reducing greenhouse gas emissions, but does not specify a final target concentration. James Hansen et al., in a seminal 2008 paper titled, [Target Atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>: Where Should Humanity Aim?](#), wrote, “If humanity wishes to preserve a planet similar to that on which civilization developed and to which life on Earth is adapted, paleoclimate evidence and ongoing climate change suggest that CO<sub>2</sub> will need to be reduced from its current 385 ppm to at most 350 ppm.” The CO<sub>2</sub> concentration is now over 400 ppm and is increasing every year. Hansen et al. think that atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> concentration must be 350 ppm or less in order to keep the global average temperature from increasing more than 2 degrees C.

During the discussion of Resolution 3) a question was raised about the cost of removing CO<sub>2</sub> from the air in order to remove what humans are currently adding ([about 36 billion metric tons in 2014](#)), and reduce the concentration back to 350 ppm. After the convention I searched for information on the available technologies and costs for removing CO<sub>2</sub> (now over 400 ppm or 0.04%) from air. I found a 2013 paper in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* by Klaus Lackner et al. titled, [The urgency of the development of CO<sub>2</sub> capture from ambient air](#), which describes technologies and gives a range of costs from \$100 to \$1000 per ton of CO<sub>2</sub>. These numbers can be compared with current prices on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions which range from [\\$1/ton in Mexico to \\$168/ton in Sweden](#).

Chad Tolman, LWVDE Climate Chair and Delegate to Convention 2016  
from the New Castle County League                      June 27, 2016