

LWVUS and LWVPDX positions on Trade, Economic Development and Port of Portland

LWVUS Trade position

(Summary: **Trade**--Support U.S. trade policies that reduce trade barriers; expand international trade; and advance the achievement of humanitarian, environmental, and social goals.)

Statement of Position on Liberal Trade Policies, as announced by the National Board, June 1973 and updated, April 2002:

The League of Women Voters of the United States supports a liberal U.S. trade policy aimed at reducing trade barriers and expanding international trade. Such a policy helps foster international cooperation, democratic values, and economic prosperity at home and abroad as well as benefiting consumers through lowered prices, expanded choice, and improved products and services. The League believes that U.S. trade policy should be based on the long-term public interest, not on special interests, and should advance the achievement of other important policy goals, including

- **_improvement of basic living standards worldwide; reduction of inequalities within and among nations;**
- **_protection of the environment and global natural resources;**
- **_respect for human, labor, religious, and political rights;**
- **_improvement of labor conditions around the world.**

The League endorses the worldwide systematic reduction of tariffs, subsidies and quotas. The League also supports the reduction of non-tariff barriers to trade consistent with the goals and strategies set forth in this position statement. Administrative and customs procedures should be efficient and flexible.

The League supports U.S. participation in an international trade organization aimed at promoting worldwide economic growth via an open trading system. This organization should have the power to hold nations accountable for commitments made in multilateral trade treaties and should recognize the legitimacy of international agreements in the areas of the environment, labor, and human rights. Its proceedings should be open to scrutiny by the public, the press, and non-governmental organizations. The public should have timely access to a wide range of its documents, and its dispute settlement process should allow friend-of-the-court briefs.

The organization should recognize the legitimacy of a country's measures in the areas of the environment, health, labor, and human rights that are more stringent than international standards or than those of its trading partners. These measures should not discriminate between domestic products and imports and should not be used as a pretext for restricting the flow of trade. The League believes that trade agreements should be negotiated multilaterally in the broadest possible international forum. Regional and bilateral trade agreements can be useful steppingstones to broader trade liberalization but should not be allowed to block progress in multilateral negotiations nor to marginalize poor countries.

The League believes that the U.S. trade policy-making process should be open, transparent, and efficient and should advance League trade policy goals. The President should be given the authority to negotiate trade agreements within prior guidelines and conditions set by Congress. Congress should have an adequate but limited time period to debate and accept or reject the resulting proposed agreements, without amendment. Congress should take an active part in the policy-making process, establishing trade priorities and negotiating objectives and observing and monitoring trade negotiations. Congress should have the resources and staff expertise necessary to fulfill its trade responsibilities. The trade policy-making processes of both Congress and the executive branch should include meaningful opportunities for input from a broad range of public interest perspectives, as well as from business interests, and should include timely assessment of the impact of proposed trade agreements.

The League supports a variety of trade-related strategies to protect the environment and promote labor, political, religious, and human rights, including

- **_trade negotiations and trade agreements that lead to progress on environmental and social objectives;**
- **_monitoring and reporting of countries' practices and performance in these areas;**
- **_recognition of the legitimacy of multilateral environmental agreements;**
- **_strengthening the International Labor Organization and promoting ratification of ILO core labor rights;**
- **_promoting ratification of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and similar international agreements;**
- **_international sanctions aimed at ending egregious violations of human rights;**
- **_legitimate labeling and certification programs (e.g., eco-labeling);**
- **_protection of endangered species;**
- **_elimination of environmentally and economically harmful subsidies and incentives (e.g., for fishing, timber, agriculture);**
- **_codes of conduct to encourage responsible business practices in these areas (e.g., guarding against abusive child labor);**
- **_domestic regulations and practices that advance environmental and social goals and that are not a pretext for restricting trade; and**
- **_aid to developing countries to improve their ability to create and enforce national laws protecting the environment and human and labor rights.**

The League supports trade and related policies that address the special needs of developing countries, with emphasis on economic growth and improving income distribution. The League supports such measures as:

- **_priority elimination of tariffs and quotas on exports of developing countries;**
- **_longer adjustment periods and financial and technical assistance for implementation of trade commitments;**
- **_special measures to ensure access to essential medicines;**
- **_financial and technical assistance to enable developing countries to participate effectively in the world trading system;**
- **_financial aid for infrastructure improvements; and**
- **_policies that recognize the special circumstances of developing countries in the areas of food security and transition to the world trading system.**

The League supports strong U.S. leadership in, and financial support of, international institutions and programs that reduce poverty and address the special needs of developing countries in the areas of the environment and human and labor rights.

The League supports measures to address the adverse impact of international trade on domestic workers, firms, and industries. Training, education, and safety net programs—such as cash assistance, relocation assistance, and health care—should be enhanced and made easily available to dislocated workers, whether or not a trade connection can be made. Portability of health care coverage, pension rights, and other fringe benefits should also be assured. The League supports temporary trade barriers consistent with international trade rules to permit firms seriously injured by surging import competition to adjust to changed conditions.

LWVPDX Position on Economic Development

Economic Development (2015)

The League of Women Voters of Portland believes that economic development is a proper concern for governmental entities including the City of Portland. We define economic development to include the broadest range of activities that contribute to the stability, growth and diversification of the Portland economy, measured by the increase and rate of increase in the median family income and standard of living in Portland.

The most important factors to be considered when promoting economic development are:

- **Quality and number of jobs**
- **A healthful environment**
- **Creation and preservation of open spaces**
- **Neighborhood revitalization that benefits existing residents**
- **Effects on existing local businesses**
- **Equity issues**
- **Ability to attract private investment**
- **Overall return on investment of public funds.**

We believe effective strategies to advance economic development goals include infrastructure development, targeted job training, and protection of the industrial land base including brownfield reclamation. Other tools that may be employed with appropriate restrictions and accountability include participation in public-private partnerships, tax increment financing (TIF) for urban renewal, loans of public funds to private enterprises, and tax credits and abatements.

Prosper Portland (formerly known as The Portland Development Commission (PDC)) is Portland's principal redevelopment and revitalization agency. When Prosper Portland uses tax increment financing for urban renewal, the City must consider the impact on overlapping taxing jurisdictions and the essential services they provide. The City should perform regular performance audits to study the effectiveness of urban renewal and TIF in the delivery of the financial benefits promised to taxing jurisdictions. The City should have a limited ability to amend urban renewal areas' duration, maximum indebtedness, or acreage. Urban renewal districts should be reserved for areas that are physically deteriorated, unsafe, poorly planned, or economically stagnant.

The League supports reviewing the City's system of regulations, fees and taxation to identify unnecessary impediments to businesses operating in the city. City regulations should be less vulnerable to differential interpretation at the permit level. Designated staff should assist businesses in navigating development regulations.

The League supports greater investment in education at all levels, including specific workforce training programs as a key component of local efforts to spur economic development. Educational institutions, private industry and government should cooperate to create a workforce with skills relevant to the needs of local industry.

The Auditor's office should evaluate the expenditure of economic development funds and the effectiveness of those expenditures in accomplishing the stated goals. Governmental agencies should hold recipients of public dollars accountable with binding agreements for recovering funds when promised goals are not met.

We support transparency and public participation in all phases of economic development projects: planning, monitoring, and evaluating.

LWVPDX/LWVCC position on Port of Portland

Port of Portland (revised 1994, 1975)

The Leagues of Women Voters of Portland and Clackamas County support planned and regulated economic growth. When planning for economic expansion to accommodate population, government should balance economic needs with environmental concerns. The public should be consulted in all planning. Regulatory agencies should continue to enforce the law in their special spheres. We agree that voluntary association of the lower Columbia River ports in Oregon and Washington for planning and marketing might be beneficial. Any movement towards consolidation of the lower Columbia River ports should be initiated by the smaller ports. We agree that Port of Portland commissioners should be appointed by the Governor and to ensure continuity their terms should be staggered.