

Offshore and Coastal Management

League of Women Voters of Oregon

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The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes responsible and responsive government management of the public's coastal and nearshore natural resources shall be based upon:

1. A complete environmental assessment, cumulative impact analysis, and baseline data specific to Oregon.
2. Recognition of coastal states and local government's rights, jurisdictions, and responsibilities to preserve and protect marine and coastal environment and economy.

Federal government's offshore activities must be consistent with Oregon's approved Coastal Zone Management Plan.

The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports uniformity of regulations governing the coastal management zone, with opportunity for public input. Jurisdictions should have the ability to enhance regulations to better address local conditions. The League supports the development and maintenance of local comprehensive plans and development codes. Funding should be adequate for effective management and enforcement and should come from a variety of sources.

The League opposes any revision, interpretation, or application of Oregon's established marine policy that would diminish Land Conservation and Development Commission Goal 19's strong environmental and natural resources conservation policy giving clear priority to long-term renewable resource uses.

The League of Women Voters of Oregon opposes oil and gas exploration and development within the state's territorial sea, and requests the state to oppose any federal lease sales within the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone off the Oregon coast. The ecological integrity, renewable natural resources, and beneficial uses of Oregon's ocean water must be protected.

The League of Women Voters of Oregon opposes exploration and development of marine minerals within the state's territorial sea. The League supports academic research that would not adversely affect the ecological integrity, renewable natural resources, and beneficial uses of the state's territorial sea.

The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports a state policy that calls on the federal government to ban the exploration and development of marine minerals with the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone off the Oregon coast. Should a ban not be effected, the following must be required:

1. An unbiased, credible scientific E.I.S. should be completed prior to any offshore mineral exploration or recovery operation.

2. Offshore mineral activities should be evaluated for degradation of the marine environment, risk to ocean fisheries, and coastal erosion problems.
3. A complete socioeconomic impact statement of offshore developments effect on the states and coastal economy should be made.

The League of Women Voters of Oregon affirms the public's right to be completely informed, actively involved and assured the opportunity to participate in decisions about offshore exploration and development, as well as onshore facilities that support offshore development.

The League of Women Voters of Oregon endorses adequate industry-financed oil spill contingency funds, compensation funds, and company bonding for marine mineral mining activities to cover claims for damage caused by their operations, onshore support facilities, and transporting vessels. Governments and other claimants should be reimbursed for, but not limited to, the following:

1. Oil spill clean-up costs.
2. Loss of natural resources or loss of use of natural resources.
3. Impairment of earning capacity.
4. Damage to real or personal property and personal injury.

The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports a policy which allows the state to terminate or modify a lease for environmental endangerment or for public safety within the state's territorial sea.

The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports the creation and operation of marine reserves and protected areas on the Oregon Coast. Siting and management of reserves should reflect a variety of factors, including habitat, species diversity, fisheries and tourism, with sound science being the most critical. The reserves should have identified goals, and continuous funding should come from multiple sources.

The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports active research into ocean energy technologies. Research should incorporate evaluation of impacts on marine habitats and the coastal economy. Funding should be from multiple sources. Commercial deployment should be allowed only after adequate scientific research is completed and regulations have been adopted. Monitoring should be ongoing with necessary actions and modifications taken to protect the marine environment. Commercial operations should agree to bear the cost of remediating and restoring any environmental damage.

The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports actions to restore and preserve estuaries to assure they function effectively in the long term. Measures could include additional reserves, streamside protection, planting, removal of invasive species, scientific research, restoration, and response to climate change. Funding should be from multiple sources. Estuary restoration should encourage education and volunteer involvement.

The League recognizes that dredging may be necessary to keep deep-water channels open for maritime commerce. Prior to activity, environmental assessments must be completed to ensure protection of habitat. Design and execution should minimize damage to natural habitats.

Recognizing that mining affects water quantity, quality, and habitat, mining practices should be strictly regulated to minimize damage and require restoration. In some instances, where preserving water quality and habitat is vital, mining should be banned.