

## Climate Emergency Tipping Points: Are we there yet?

### League Positions

*Statement of Position on Climate Change Policy, announced by the National Board, January 2019*<sup>1</sup>:

The League believes that climate change is a serious threat facing our nation and our planet. The League believes that an interrelated approach to combating climate change—including through energy conservation, air pollution controls, building resilience, and promotion of renewable resources—is necessary to protect public health and defend the overall integrity of the global ecosystem. The League supports climate goals and policies that are consistent with the best available climate science and that will ensure a stable climate system for future generations. Individuals, communities, and governments must continue to address this issue, while considering the ramifications of their decision, at all levels—local, state, regional, national, and global.

*The Jefferson County LWV Position in Brief on sustainability*<sup>2</sup>:

Support a way of life which seeks to balance environmental, economic, and human needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet the same goal.

**Tipping Points** — Abrupt changes in climate are now an established phenomenon in Earth's history, and there is growing concern that our planet may be at one or more "tipping points" of dramatic change, this time due to human actions. Scientists from across different disciplines are now looking at many parts of the Earth system for signs of such pivotal shifts either already underway or likely to happen in this century.

[https://www.nasa.gov/topics/earth/tipping\\_points.html](https://www.nasa.gov/topics/earth/tipping_points.html)

**Project Drawdown**<sup>®</sup> — <https://drawdown.org/>

Project Drawdown is a nonprofit organization that is a leading resource for information and insight about climate solutions. The professional staff of scientists and engineers, in fields including transportation, finance, health, climate dynamics, land use, agriculture, oceans, buildings, and electricity, conduct ongoing reviews and analysis of climate solutions. Their 2017 publication titled *Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming* has become widely acknowledged as seminal.

“Drawdown is the future point in time when levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere stop climbing and start to steadily decline. This is the point when we begin the process of stopping

---

<sup>1</sup> “LWVCO Positions” is available on the LWVcolorado.org website in “Documents” under the Members tab.

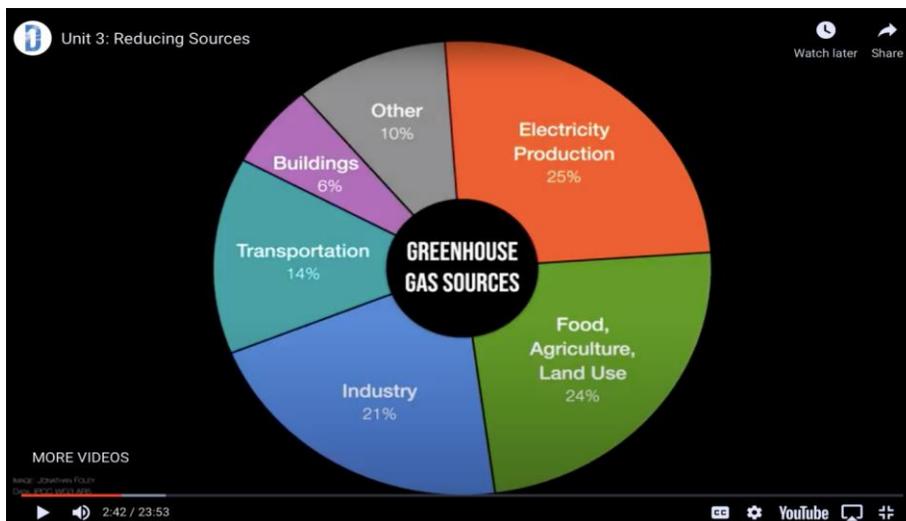
<sup>2</sup> “LWV Jeffco A Guide to Policy and Positions 2020” is available on the LWVJeffco.org website in “Documents” under the Members tab.

further climate change and averting potentially catastrophic warming. It is a critical turning point for life on Earth.” (quote from the Project Drawdown website)

The Project Drawdown team conducts ongoing review and analysis of climate solutions — the practices and technologies that can stem and begin to reduce the excess of greenhouse gases in our atmosphere. The 2020 Drawdown Review, an update to the original 2017 Drawdown book, states, “Project Drawdown is a living effort and a learning organization. Project Drawdown’s work points to two fundamental realities: we can reach drawdown by mid-century if we pursue climate solutions already in hand; and, doing so will require immense ambition and bold action.” In keeping with this ambition, the team reviews “solutions beyond the drawdown list,” stating: “We continue to add to it as we review and quantify the potential of solutions to stop emissions and/or support sinks, as well as broader societal transformations that also have climate benefits.” (The Drawdown Review, 2020, pages 4, 70, 76). (Carbon sinks are vegetation, oceans or any reservoir, natural or otherwise, that accumulates and stores some carbon-containing chemical compound, thereby lowering the concentration of carbon in the atmosphere.)

Climate solutions are attainable with increased access to free, science-based educational resources, elevated public discourse, and tangible examples of real-world action. Project Drawdown developed a six-part educational video series, “Climate Solutions 101” that is available for public use. Jonathon Foley, Director of Project Drawdown, is an award-winning scientist, sustainability expert, author and public speaker and the host of Climate Solutions 101.

We will show video 1 “Setting the Stage”, video 3 “Reducing Sources” and video 6 “Making it Happen” to inform our members and stimulate discussion. These three videos are part of a major educational effort focused solely on solutions. Project Drawdown focuses on game-changing climate action based on its own rigorous scientific review and assessment. Climate solutions are offered for production of electricity and food, agriculture, industry, transportation, buildings, and other sources of greenhouse gas emissions globally.



## Making it Happen — the future is ours to choose

*The following is based on the sixth and final video of the Project Drawdown series.*

The future begins now. It is not too late, but time is of the essence. We must bring the ideas of how to deal with climate change into every day conversations and begin to implement the best ideas. Now is the time for action, so let's go!

It took about a hundred years to get into the quagmire in which we find ourselves today. Some emissions require centuries to dissipate. We have only two or three decades to reduce or eliminate greenhouse gas emissions. Where do we begin?

No time is left to find the perfect solution to everything. We need to move forward with the tools that are available. There are relatively easy and cost-effective solutions we can deploy now, while also addressing social inequities and justice reforms.

Policies and regulations can propel positive change. Business and industry need to be incentivized to take a long-range view, rather than a short-term focus on shareholder profits. Changing this focus would begin to move capital out of climate-destructive practices and into the development of new technologies for travel, farming, and manufacturing.

As individuals, we can purchase energy-efficient appliances and switch to renewable energy as fast as possible. The switch is becoming easy, since solar and wind power are the cheapest ways to generate electricity. We can conserve water and not waste food. We will need to retrofit buildings and retire old vehicles and other machinery.

What do we need? We need a bold vision of leadership and a positive vision of the future. We need to dream rather than worry about a nightmare that could occur. We need to invite everyone to join the effort. We need to be the change.

### Colorado LWV Climate Emergency Task Force

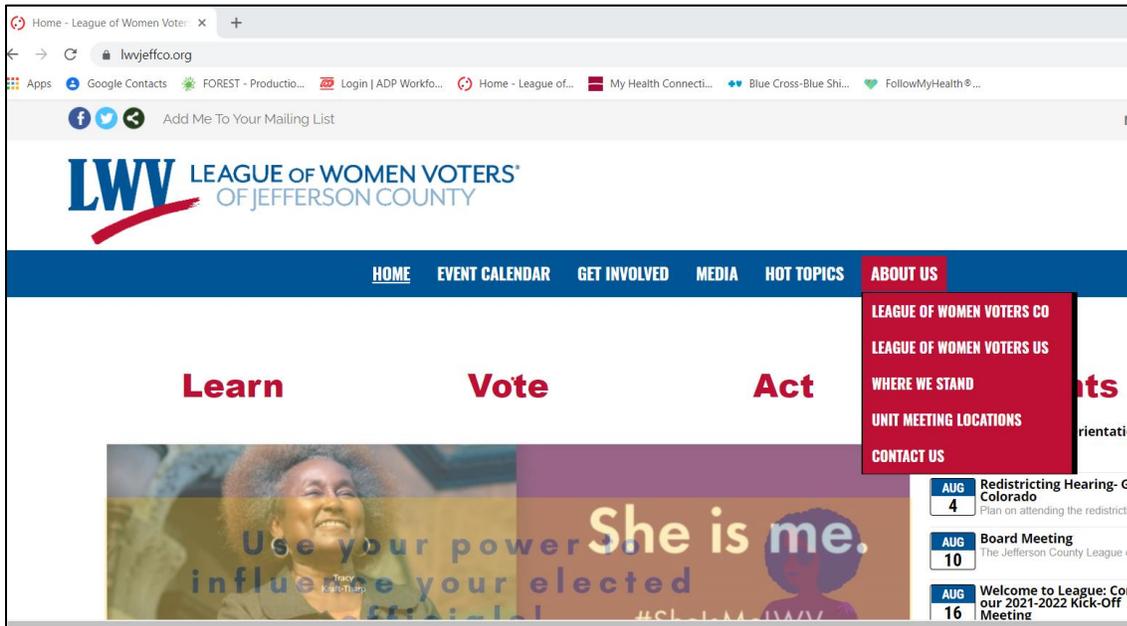
[https://lwvco.clubexpress.com/content.aspx?page\\_id=22&club\\_id=314195&module\\_id=468243&actr=4](https://lwvco.clubexpress.com/content.aspx?page_id=22&club_id=314195&module_id=468243&actr=4)  
" class=

The scale of the climate crisis demands collective action, and the Colorado League of Women Voters responded by establishing a Climate Emergency Task Force. All members are invited to join the Task Force and/or to tap into the information that is available on our web site. We are not a study group, but are dedicated to action!

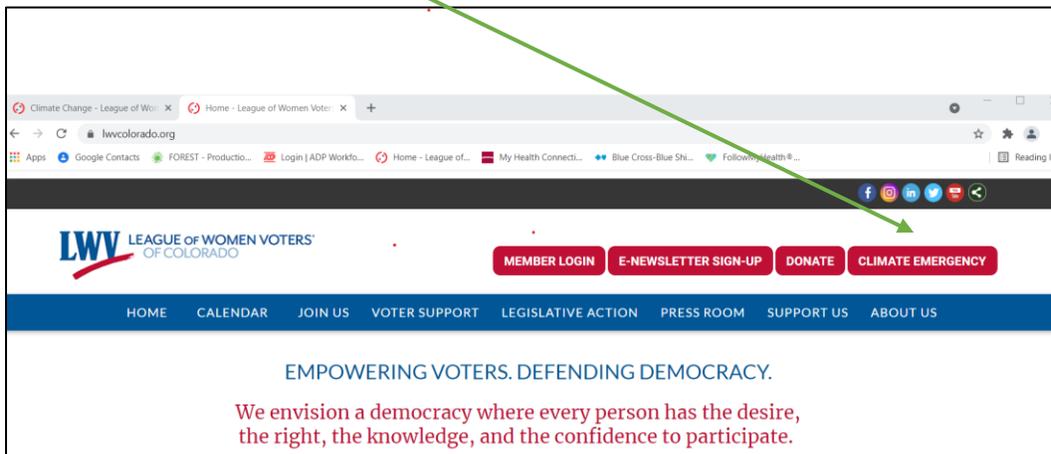
### How to access the Climate Emergency website

It's easy to access the Climate Emergency Task Force web site on the State League web site. Just follow these three steps.

1. Open your browser and go to the Jefferson County League site at [lwvjeffco.org](http://lwvjeffco.org)
2. Click on the “About Us” button and choose “League of Women Voters CO” from the drop-down menu.

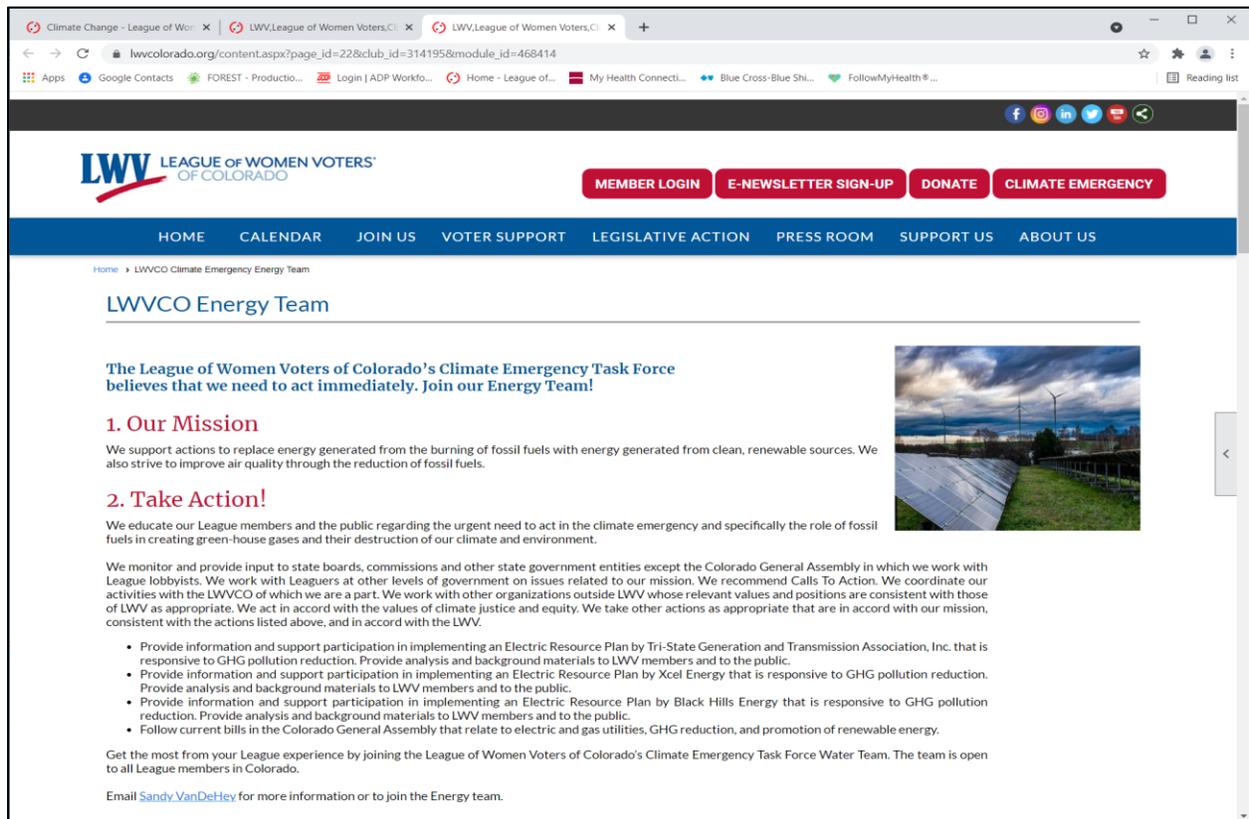


3. At the top right of the main menu on the Colorado web page, you will see a red Climate Emergency button.



This button will take you to the Climate Emergency main page, where there is information about our mission and links to our Climate Emergency teams, LWV resources, federal agency resources, Colorado legislation and policy, state agencies and regulatory boards, and sites to learn more about the threats from climate change.

So far, the Task Force has organized teams to address six topics: energy, human migration and climate justice, plastics, regenerative agriculture and pollinators, transportation, and water. As an example, here is the top of the page developed by the Energy Team.



Note that the Jeffco LWV web site will soon have a direct link to the Climate Emergency Task Force, so it will no longer be necessary to log onto the state (lwwco) web page.

Please join the Task Force in this critically important work!

## Update on Jefferson County Sustainability Commission

As we discussed at the May 2021 Unit meetings, the Jefferson County Sustainability Commission was created to serve as an information clearinghouse and a compendium of sustainability best practices. Members of the Sustainability Commission are volunteers. Their duties include articulating sustainability goals, objectives and voluntary targets for county government and industrial, commercial, residential and recreational sectors county-wide.

The Sustainability Commission was given authority to develop a Climate Action Plan via a resolution from the Board of County Commissioners (Resolution 254).

- The first step in the process was to establish baseline of greenhouse gas emissions. A greenhouse gas inventory has been completed from International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives. We (Jeffco LWV Sustainability Committee) will be requesting a copy.
- The second step is to secure the services of a contractor to lead development of the Climate Action Plan. A Request for Proposals was opened for a month and closed on August 5th. Five proposals were received.
- An evaluation committee will be selected to review and score the proposals. The evaluation committee will include the Jeffco Public Health equity person (a new position). Evaluating the proposals will take a few weeks.
- Several more steps are required to select the contractor and award the contract. Work by the contractor on the Climate Action Plan, which will include public involvement, will probably start in early November and take about 6 months to complete.

It isn't yet known yet how the Federal Infrastructure Bill may impact Jeffco's budget and sustainability efforts. The Sustainability Commission will be looking for infrastructure cross over project opportunities. There will be a new position hired for the implementation of the Climate Action Plan.

#### Possible action

- Partners in Energy (XCEL Energy) is providing HOA and residential kits to promote sustainability. The Jefferson County Sustainability Commission will be contacting HOAs. Perhaps LWV could help with contacting HOAs or connecting HOAs to the Commission.
- The Colorado Energy Dept has a program to assist low-income homeowners with weatherization and solar energy. Energy Resource Central wants to work on energy efficiency with Porchlight, Jeffco Schools, NGOs and religious institutions. Could we help facilitate this?

#### Prepared by the Jefferson County LWV Sustainability Committee

Sandy Schuster, Sandy VanDeHey, Pat Mesec, Laurie Scholl, Tom Ging, Nancy Warren, Elaine Rideout, Duskey Mallory, Karil Frohboese, Cathy Futch, Steve Bernard

#### References

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Sixth Assessment Report, *Climate Change 2021:*

*The Physical Science Basis*, 2021, <https://www.ipcc.ch/assessment-report/ar6/>

Project Drawdown®, <https://drawdown.org/>

The Drawdown Review, 2020, <https://drawdown.org/drawdown-review>

Paul Hawken (editor). 2017. Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming. Penguin Books. 256 pp.