RESPONDING TO CLIMATE CHANGE CAN’T WAIT: TWO EXAMPLES
Climate Change, Food and Farming in the Northeast;
Slowing, Sinking and Spreading Water in Tompkins County in the Face of Climate Change
Monday, November 17, 7:00-8:30 PM
Tompkins County Public Library

NATURAL RESOURCES
The Natural Resources Committee is excited about our upcoming program, Responding to Climate Change Can’t Wait: Two examples. Our first speaker will be Allison Chatrchyan, Director of the Cornell Institute for Climate Change and Agriculture, who will talk about the challenges faced by farmers and food producers in the wake of climate change, under the title Climate Change, Food and Farming in the Northeast. The second example, to be addressed by Scott Doyle, Senior Planner at the Tompkins County Planning Department, concerns water issues and is entitled Slowing, Sinking and Spreading Water in Tompkins County in the Face of Climate Change. The enthusiastic response to our inquiry about co-sponsoring our program, indicated the high level of concern of many in the community about this issue. There are a number of different topics we can and should address related to climate change, so we expect to do a follow-up program in the future.

Our committee will soon be meeting with the Health Care Committee to begin discussions of our March program. The focus will be on the connections between environmental issues and the health and well-being of our residents. So stay tuned as our plans develop.

In addition to developing our programs, our committee continues to monitor issues and events surrounding fracking, the hazardous waste legislation, the build-up of pipelines and

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dependence on natural gas in New York State, and many other environmental issues. If you are interested in joining our conversations contact Kay Wagner (cmw18@cornell.edu, 529-3322).

Kay Wagner

STUDENTS INSIDE ALBANY

Our League is accepting high school student nominations and application and will sponsor two qualified Tompkins County student representatives to attend the 15th annual Students Inside Albany conference, scheduled for May 17-20, 2015, in Albany, New York.

The conference, sponsored by the League of Women Voters of New York State Education Foundation, Inc., is designed to increase students’ awareness of their responsibility in a representative government and provide the tools necessary for meeting that responsibility. This interactive conference will bring together high school students from across the state to learn about New York State government and the process by which citizens can participate in the policy-making arena. As part of the program, students will tour the Capitol and observe both the Senate and Assembly in action by spending an afternoon shadowing their legislators.

Students are sponsored by one or another of the 50 local LWV Leagues throughout New York State and all their expenses are covered, including travel, meals and lodging in Albany. Participants also receive a student membership in the League of Women Voters that includes an e-mail newsletter and invitations to meetings on government related topics.

If you know of any students who might profit from this experience, you can obtain more information about the program and required forms, at the LWVTC website, www.lwvtompkins.org. (under Programs-Youth Programs) or contact the local Students Inside Albany (SIA) coordinator, Kathleen Yen, by calling 607-257-8199. The deadline for receipt of all forms (application and letters of nomination) is December 15, 2014.

Kathleen Yen

SOUTHERN TIER LEAGUES

All local Leagues in the Southern Tier region are getting together on Saturday, January 10, 10:30 – 3:00 at the Elmira Library (snow date is January 24th). We plan to share ideas about membership, leadership, advocacy, and education. ALL League members, not just board members, are encouraged to attend. Transportation is available. For more information, call Kay Sharp at (607) 272-4748.

PROGRAM REPORT

Our Natural Resources Committee invites all to attend an important public educational program. Monday. November 17, 7:00-8:30 PM, in the Borg Warner Room, Tompkins County Public Library: Responding To Climate Change Can’t Wait: Two Examples. Climate change is here and we have already experienced the damaging effects to our environment during the past decades. The League will present a serious look at two problems we face now, what the challenges are, how we can adapt, and what

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<td>Dec 6</td>
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<td>Feb 2</td>
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<td>Board Meeting</td>
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<td>Mar 23</td>
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<td>Environmental Impacts Upon Health</td>
<td>TCPL</td>
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<td>Apr 6</td>
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we can do now to prepare for future events and mitigate the damage. The event has seven co-sponsors: Cayuga Lake Watershed Network, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County, the Ithaca Journal, Ithaca Youth Farm Project, League of Women Voters of Steuben County, Sustainable Tompkins, and Tompkins County Environmental Management Council.

There is no public program in January 2015. The Board is planning for our traditional Soup and Bread Luncheon to be held, Saturday, February 28, 2015. Watch for more information in January. The program will be a recognition of March as Women’s History Month.

The Health Care Committee and the Natural Resources Committee are working together on a program to be held on March 23, at the Tompkins County Public Library. The program will address environmental impacts upon human health.

Florence B. Smith VP-Programs

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TOMPKINS COUNTY: BOARD 2012-13

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<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
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MEMBERSHIP

A membership booklet, Welcome to the League of Women Voters of Tompkins County, providing information about the League of Women Voters, was mailed to all new members along with a Voters Guide – Part I, information on how to contact your elected representatives, and what offices and proposals you will be voting on in the 2014 Election.

The membership booklet contains the principles, purpose, history, organization, finances, contact information, and a summary of Public Policy Positions (national and state) taken from Impact on Issues, the official statements of League public policy positions. If you would like to receive a copy by mail, please call me and let me know. The booklet is also available on our local website, www.lwvtompkins.org. The material from the state and US Leagues on Impact on Issues is also available to view, print,

If you know of someone interested in learning more about the League, please let me know and I will send them some information and a membership form. The membership form is also available on our local website.

Kathleen Yen, 257-8199

HEALTH CARE

The New York State Assembly recently issued a notice of public hearing to receive testimony concerning the New York Health bill. The bill would: establish the New York Health program, a comprehensive system of access to health insurance for New York state residents; provide for administrative structure of the plan; provide for powers and duties of the board of trustees; define the scope of benefits, payment methodologies and care coordination; establish the New York Health Trust Fund which would hold monies from a variety of sources to be used solely to finance the plan; enact provisions relating to financing of New York Health, including a payroll assessment, similar to the Medicare tax; establish a temporary commission on implementation of the plan; and provide for collective negotiations by health care providers with New York Health.

New York Health, a universal “single payer” health coverage bill, would replace insurance company coverage, premiums, deductibles, co-pays, limited provider networks and out-of-network charges. Instead, it would provide comprehensive, universal health coverage for every New Yorker, with a benefit package more comprehensive than commercial or other health plans, with full choices of doctors and other providers. The program would be funded by broad-based taxes based on ability to pay. It would eliminate the local share of Medicaid (which would become part of New York Health).

The bill, A.5389-A/S.2078-A, was introduced by Assembly Health Committee Chair Richard N. Gottfried and Senator Bill Perkins.

Hearing locations nearest to Ithaca and dates are: Syracuse at 10 AM on Thursday, Dec. 4 and Rochester at 10 AM on Monday, Dec. 8. For full details, other dates and locations, and registration information go to http://assembly.state.ny.us/comm/Health/2014105/ (this URL IS case sensitive!); or contact Michelle Newman of the Assembly Health Committee staff at 518-455-4371 or newmann@assembly.state.ny.us

Kathleen Yen for the Health Care Committee

TWO CURRENT NYS LEAGUE STUDIES

Ballot Access Study

The state League has two study items, one of which is the Ballot Access study, which will explore whether another form of primary would be beneficial to the democratic process in New York State. Below are some excerpts from the Ballot Access Study Guide 2014. Please go to the state League website, www.lwvny.org, for more information on the study and issues addressed.

Purpose and Scope:

In New York State, candidates for elected office most often gain access to the general election ballot by obtaining political party ballot lines via various mechanisms. The League of Women Voters Ballot Access study will examine the role of political parties in the process of gaining access to the general election ballot.

Specifically, we will explore the process of gaining party lines on the general ballot via (1) New York’s closed primary system, (2) fusion voting, and (3) Wilson Pakula certificates. The study will include discussion and comparison of the different forms of primary systems and other states’ experiences with fusion voting. In addition, we will explore the possible effects New York’s ballot access process has on issues such as voter representation, corruption, voter turnout, and partisanship. At the conclusion of the study, we hope to be able to offer suggestions for ballot access best practices that ensure a thriving and functioning democracy.
Some Criteria for Evaluating Election Methods:

- Ensure majority rule
- Encourage minority representation
- Encourage fair gender representation
- Produce fair and accurate representation of different political views
- Increase voter participation
- Encourage geographical representation
- Encourage “sincere” voting
- Maximize effective votes/minimize “wasted” votes
- Provide a reasonable range of voter choice
- Prevent fraud and political manipulation
- Encourage competitive elections
- Easy to use and administer
- Other: promoting healthy political parties, ensuring stable government encouraging issue-oriented campaigns, protecting fundamental rights which include freedom of speech and association, discouraging extremism, helping manage political conflict, being responsive to changes in public opinion, producing results viewed as legitimate, reducing campaign spending, establishing close links between constituents and representatives and evaluating whether or not an election method has a proven track record.

Term Limit Study

The second of the two LWVNYS studies concerns Term Limits. Complete information, background, bibliography, and links may be found on the state League’s website, www.lwvny.org. Below are some excerpts from the study guide.

Current LWVUS and LWVNYS Positions: The national League currently opposes term limits for members of Congress and the NYS League opposes term limits for members of the NYS Legislature.

Purpose: The purpose of the 2014 study …is to learn the effects of term limits. Term limits, once enacted appear to affect only a limited number of incumbents, but actually, they have a far-reaching impact on the political system involved. Term limits have actually reshaped governmental power structures. They have altered the selection of people who make the laws, thereby having a major influence on public policy. By dramatically changing the composition of legislatures, they have affected the authority of leaders. The balance of power between the legislative and executive branches has been changed.

Arguments FOR term limits:

- Term limits fulfill the promise of a citizen legislature by allowing more people to serve as elected officials. It helps ensure that legislatures will not be dominated by career politicians.

Arguments AGAINST term limits:

- Term limits interfere with the fundamental right of voters in a representative democracy to elect their representatives. “We already have term limits – they are elections.”

- Removing experienced and knowledgeable legislators weakens the legislative branch of government. A weak legislature upsets the balance of power between the legislative and executive branches of government.

- Term limited legislators will seek short term solutions to problems rather than thinking of long term consequences.

- Term limited legislators will not have time to gain institutional knowledge and policy expertise and will turn to lobbyists and bureaucrats for information about issues and how to handle them. Since these groups are not elected, they are not answerable to voters.

Go to http://www.lwvny.org/programs-studies.html to find extensive information on both of these studies.
YOUR REPRESENTATIVES IN WASHINGTON

SENATORS:
Kirsten E. Gillibrand 202-224-4451 e-mail and web-site: www.gillibrand.senate.gov
Charles E. Schumer 202-224-6542; senator@schumer.senate.gov; www.schumer.senate.gov

REPRESENTATIVES:
Tom Reed 202-225-3161; 607-654-7566; e-mail and web-site: reed.house.gov

YOUR REPRESENTATIVES IN ALBANY

SENATORS
James Seward 518-455-3131; 607-758-9005 www.nysenate.gov/senator/james-l-seward
51st—Towns of Groton, Dryden, Caroline, Danby
54th—Town of Lansing
59th—Towns of Ithaca, Newfield, Enfield, Ulysses, & City of Ithaca

ASSEMBLYWOMAN
Barbara Lifton 518-455-5444; 607-277-8030 www.assembly.state.ny.us/mem/Barbara-Lifton

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