Statement on the Dane County budget, October 15, 2014

The League of Women Voters of Dane County is here in support of a number of proposals by the County Executive for the 2015 Budget. He has grouped them according to their benefits: thus, to WATER, CLIMATE ADAPTATION, and CYCLING/RECREATION. The League and the public know them as the Clean Water and Clean Air goals that will be the underpinnings of sustainability.

The Capital Budget proposal asks for $10 million for lakes clean up. We have supported this item in many past budgets and do so again in the interest of continuing improvements in Dane County's air and waters. We also support the several projects in the Operations Budget that will improve the water quality of Lake Mendota and the whole Yahara system, projects that will reduce the run-off from farm fields and urban structures that are major sources of the phosphorus that causes algae and other undesirable water plants. We also support continuing and improving the manure digesters that eliminate phosphorus production and have the dual benefit of creating methane gas that is burned, thus providing cleaner energy than do fossil-based fuels.

We are pleased that the County Executive recognizes the need to prepare for the sporadic heavy rainfall that climate-change is expected to bring. The Budget allows for good maintenance of stream banks, culverts and ditches to help control destructive flooding of farm fields and parks, as well as urban land and structures. It would allow for construction of needed new bridges also.

As for the Clean Air efforts in the County Budget the League of Women Voters has supported various methods of reducing carbon for improving air quality and we will support an item in the Capital Budget for capturing the carbon dioxide given off by two landfills and the generators that convert their gas to electricity. The Budget proposal would also explore the development of solar systems in two large buildings, one for heat and the other for power generation.

The League is pleased to support several projects for improving road surfaces and building new bike trails. The County Executive is obviously counting on greatly increased biking for work and for pleasure as another step towards cleaner air.

We recognize the recreational and environmental values of cleaner water and cleaner air and support these steps in the County Budget. We hope that you, our Dane County supervisors, will approve these Budget items and will educate your constituencies about the dual benefits they offer. We see them as essential elements in keeping life sustainable on this planet.

[Presented by Connie Threinen.]
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