Sustainability and Climate Action Committee (SACAC)

Annual Report for 2021-2022

State Legislators have introduced and been working on (the session continues through July) a number of environmental and climate-related bills. State agencies have also been considering and holding hearings on changes which will affect both environment and climate. Much of the action of SACAC members this past year has focused on support for bills and work for agency rule changes.

SACAC’s work has been focused in part on educating ourselves on significant issues through reading and watching some of the many, many valuable webinars produced by the LWVMA and an increasing number of nonprofit organizations and groups. LWVUS had representatives at COP26 who informed us of the activities in Edinburgh through daily reports and later analyses.

SACAC members attended (virtually) state legislative committee and agency hearings, met with legislators, and frequently phoned, emailed, and wrote letters to legislators and government agencies in support of bills or rule changes. We have found our Senator, Jo Comerford, to be particularly supportive on environmental issues. SACAC has also initiated or supported letters from the Amherst League to Town government on environmental issues.

What issues have we been focusing on? Since our beginning as the Energy Committee, Amherst League members have been concerned about large scale use of biomass. The proposed Palmer-Springfield biomass plant was a dominating concern in the fall. A small group led ably by Martha Hanner worked hard on this, an important case of environmental justice. Forest preservation has become a major focus with the increasing number of large-scale solar installations planned for wooded western Massachusetts. SACAC members work in small groups, at times in cooperation with other Leagues, while individuals also pursue a range of concerns, from the health of bees to zero waste.

We lost two long-time members this year, Jane Harrington and Mira Menon. We miss both of them. Whether you have the energy to join a demonstration or an in-person committee meeting, or prefer to work through your computer, phone, or the U.S. mail, there is a place for you in SACAC. Think about joining us this year.