

LWVIL NATURAL RESOURCES POSITION: PESTICIDES

Support for reduction in pesticide use and the promotion of non-toxic alternatives.

Position in Brief: Support for reduction of exposure to all pesticides. The use of non-toxic alternatives should be encouraged.

PESTICIDES (1991): The League of Women Voters of Illinois supports the reduction of exposure to all pesticides and urges the use of non-toxic alternatives. Governmental bodies should encourage a reduction in pesticide use through the promotion of management programs such as integrated pest management, sustainable agriculture and non-toxic control techniques.

Background The position was adopted by delegates at the 1991 LWVIL Convention and is based on a 1990 Lake Michigan Inter-League position.

LWVIL action

- The League has supported the adoption of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) policies, especially in schools, and opposed the preemption of local governmental pesticide regulations.
- Local Leagues have co-sponsored sustainable agriculture conferences and integrated pest management forums, and worked with school districts in the implementation of IPM policies.
- In 1993, as part of a statewide local League network, several local Leagues joined the efforts of the Illinois Pesticide Education Network and the Safer Pest Control Project and became part of the process of gathering and sharing information on better and safer ways to prevent pest problems in the home and community.
- Beginning in 1996, the LWVIL joined the Yards for Nature Campaign. The focus of the project is to inform the public about the hazards of unnecessary chemical pesticides on lawns and green space and to provide resources to individuals and groups interested in non-chemical alternatives for maintaining a healthy lawn.
- In 1998, the LWVIL participated in a task force convened by the Safer Pest Control Project to identify policies and programs needed in Illinois to protect children from unnecessary exposure to pesticides. In 1999, the League joined A Better Choice Campaign for Healthier Schools formed by the task force. This coalition lobbied successfully in support of legislation amending the Structural Pest Control Act by requiring the adoption of an IPM program in schools and the Illinois Pesticide Act by requiring notification to parents and staff prior to pesticide application inside school buildings and on school grounds.
- In 2002, LWVIL attended the Healthy Schools summit and joined the Illinois Healthy Schools Campaign, a statewide coalition working to heighten awareness with legislators, schools, and parents on the need for environmentally safe schools.
- On January 1, 2008, the Structural Pest Control Act expired after legislation to extend a sunset provision in the Act did not pass. Legislation introduced to provide for the continuation and re-enactment of the Act from January 1, 2008, to December

31, 2009 passed both the Illinois House and Senate. Thanks to League members who helped make the passage of this bill one of the few environmental legislative successes of the Spring 2008 session. Similar legislation introduced in the Illinois House and Senate in 2009 extended the repeal date of the Structural Pest Control Act from December 31, 2009 to January 1, 2019. Although passage of this legislation was not achieved, the League will continue to promote the passage of this important piece of legislation. The League however did appreciate the passage of legislation regulating the application of pesticides in schools and childcare centers and recommending a Pesticide-Free Turf Care program.