

CLIMATE CHANGE PREPAREDNESS AND RESILIENCE

The League of Women Voters believes that we will have resilient and prosperous communities safeguarded from climate change disaster through preparedness. Funding climate change preparedness is more fiscally responsible than repairing the increasingly frequent damage of severe weird weather. Preparedness plans must encompass both 1) seamless regional coordination and communication of emergency management systems and 2) robust funding to proactively build resilient infrastructure, buildings and housing, and community networks. The League of Women Voters believes a regional climate resilience plan under the direction of a climate resilience leader is of utmost importance. The Climate Resilience Officer will use the highest level of climate science and risk assessments to protect our residents, farms, businesses and ecosystems. The preparedness plans are to be implemented in all urban and rural communities in the region.

- A. Incorporate climate resilience in all policies emphasizing inclusion in all regional decision-making.
- B. Create a Regional Climate Resilience Team with a Climate Resilience Officer (CRO) empowered and funded to implement a structured process to develop a shared vision for change, goals, shared measurements and the necessary policies to achieve the desired outcomes. (The region is defined as Outagamie, Calumet and Winnebago Counties.) This team could be new or reside within an already-existing regional body.
 - This will address two important problems: 1) how to increase synergy, communication and interaction across complex systems (e.g., government and private and non-profits entities) and 2) prevent “reinventing the wheel” by researching other cities and states that are further along the resilience journey to learn and adopt more quickly relevant successful practices.
 - The role of the CRO is to lead the resilience vision and strategy process bringing together a wide variety of stakeholders and including input from all local governments (counties, cities, villages, towns, and tribal nations), communities, vulnerable populations and public/private entities. The CRO will establish an effective governance structure (e.g., “Collective Impact” framework), organizational policies and procedures and will allocate necessary resources to ensure long term success. The CRO will work with all groups to facilitate, communicate and promote collaboration and synergy across projects and plans. The CRO will act as the “resilience point person” ensuring that a resilience lens is used in all decision-making and will identify government policy gaps that represent barriers to achieving the vision.
 - The dedicated Regional Resilience Team will have three key roles: project management, data management and facilitation. It will coordinate participating organizations and agencies. It will plan, manage and provide on-going facilitation

technology, communication support, data collection and reporting. It will codify and document the regional resilience initiatives and learning into a set of tools that can be shared or scaled up within and across regions. It will collaborate with county Emergency Management teams to ensure that regional risk assessments of vulnerable infrastructure, sites and populations are updated on a regular basis and include latest science-based climate forecasts.

- C. Build trust among people in the region about the importance of proactive climate resilience using communication, education and transparency.
- Climate change impacts a multitude of layers within society: businesses, homes, agriculture, schools, health, food supply chain, air and water quality, waste management, energy sources, roads, bridges, etc. There is a great need for silo-breakers, translators and communicators to use more common language that can reach all people within our region.
 - Building social resilience and strong neighborhoods with safe public spaces to promote social connectedness are vital factors that save lives during extreme weather events.
- D. A blend of innovative private and public funding approaches will be used to ensure long term implementation of the resilience vision.
- E. Annual government budgets will include both contributions to the operational budget for the Climate Resilience Team's ongoing work and contributions to a restricted fund to be used for climate preparedness and resilience.
- F. Construction projects, replacement or new, must be designed for future climate resilience. They must be based on sound climate forecasts, risk assessments and aligned with the resilience vision, not just on pre-existing construction standards. Remove government restrictions for only replacement-in-kind.
- Building codes, permits and zoning must always consider *where and how* we build anticipating future climate risks. Consistently require measures that consider ecological balance, green infrastructures and low-regret strategies for long term sustainability.
- G. Protection of vulnerable populations must be the first priority for climate resilience planning. Plans will identify the types of populations and their locations within the region and how climate change impacts them now and in the future. Plans will provide the vital services (transportation, health, etc.) and essential needs (clean water, food, safe shelter, reliable energy, heating/cooling, etc.). Plans will also identify and protect or restore vulnerable ecosystems.