



Communications & Environment Report Convention April 23, 2016

Madame President, Sisters in the League,

Let me begin by apologizing for not devoting more time and energy to the *Environment* side of my position. I will begin to make up for that omission today. Over the first year of my term, I have devoted significant energy and time to redesigning our web site to what I believe, is one that serves our women well, particularly those who are unable to attend meetings, and small councils that may be in need of resources different than those offered on other CWL sites in terms of prayers, ideas and activities that can be used at their monthly meetings. There are many examples of documents, video clips and web sites where additional, inspiring and valuable resources can be found. I welcome any suggestions or comments for resources that you would like to see on the site. If you haven’t already checked out the *Zones tabs* on our site, all the photos that have been submitted to me for the PowerPoint that will be shown at our banquet this evening are available. See if you can garner some ideas from activities that other councils have used. I encourage you to keep sending me photos of future events so that I can begin to prepare for next year’s convention. Please include your Zone, name of your council, the activity in the photo and if you want, names of women in the photo.

To all presidents here today, ensure that you pick up packaged postcards for our ongoing fight against Pornography. There is no cost to send these to Ottawa, and your personal message can be added to the growing voices protesting the continuing evil that this is in our families and communities.

Now on to the Environment! We have a National Resolution asking the federal government to to ban the use of neonicotinoid pesticides. These pesticides are increasingly found in the ecosystem, posing a risk to pollinators (e.g. bees), birds and aquatic invertebrates. They belong to a class of neuro-active (they target the neurological system), nicotine-based insecticides, and are widely used in Canadian agriculture and horticulture. In Canada, “neonicotinoid pesticides are approved for use as seed treatments (this means that the seeds are sprayed with the chemical, absorbing the chemical into their tissues, before being planted), soil applications, and foliar sprays (a technique of applying the chemical directly onto the leaves of the plants where it is absorbed directly into the plant) on a wide variety of agricultural crops such as oilseeds, grains, pulse crops (e.g. peas and beans), fruits, vegetables, greenhouse crops ornamental plants, and Christmas trees. They also have approved uses on turf, as a tree injection, outdoor residential areas, and as pet care products”. If your council has yet to take action on this Resolution, here are a couple of ideas that are RIPE for making a difference in your community:

1. Advise local nursery managers/greenhouses you will only purchase plants free of neonicotinoids and ask managers to communicate your request to their suppliers.
2. Avoid the use of systemic bee-toxic pesticides in your garden. 5. If you have these products at home, dispose of them as municipal hazardous waste or take them back to the store where you bought them.
3. Provide habitat for pollinators by planting untreated pollinator-friendly trees and flowers.

Environmental Rights *around the globe, the right to a healthy environment has gained legal recognition faster than any other human right during the last 50 years. Canada has been late to the game, but things are starting to change. Last year, the city of Toronto became the 100th Canadian municipality to pass a declaration supporting its residents’ right to a healthy environment. . . . Last December, Linda Duncan, MP for Edmonton-Strathcona, tabled Bill C-202. The private member’s bill could lead to Canada’s first federal Environmental Bill of Rights. . . a federal Bill of Rights means that the federal government recognizes that a healthy environment is a fundamental right that needs to be protected.* ***Ecojustice winter 2016 pg. 1***

My display area has information on an exclusively Canadian way to work toward the goal of ensuring that all Canadians both alive today, and those yet to be born, will have their rights protected. The **BLUE DOT MOVEMENT** was created by the Suzuki Foundation and has grown exponentially as Canadians learn about its objectives and vision. Recognition in the Charter is the final step in protecting every person in Canada’s right to clean air and water. safe food and a stable climate. This ensures that we all benefit from a healthy environment, world-class standards and a say in the decisions that affect our health and well-being. Across the country, Canadians believe in our inherent right to a healthy environment — clean water, fresh air, safe food and a say in decisions that affect our health and wellbeing. One by one, people like you stand up to say this right should be recognized. This growing movement of Canadians calls upon their local communities to pass municipal declarations respecting people's right to live in a healthy environment. With so many communities calling for action from all levels of government, the next step is to have our provincial and federal governments follow suit and pass environmental bills of rights. Know that you can and must make a difference in caring for our common home. If not you, then who? If not now, then when? Great gifts, living in the sacred space gifted us by God our Creator, comes with great responsibility. We can no longer deny that this gift from God has been desecrated and is in need of our caring and loving touch. I tried to find a quote from Pope Francis’ encyclical and just couldn’t – I have far too many passages underlined, highlighted and dog-eared to do that! I urge you to spend some time in prayerful dialogue, listening and openness to this wonderful document – it will change your life – and our world – forever.

This concludes my report, are there any questions?

Respectfully submitted,



Sr. Susan Scott

There is one resolution under this standing committee, Madame President.