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LWVWI Opposition to AB840/SB843

The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin opposes AB840/SB843 for two reasons: first, our support for renewable energy and second, for long-term comprehensive planning.

Regarding renewable energy: If passed, the bill would thwart the development of wind and solar renewable energy sources as it requires any renewable energy source that primarily supplies a data center be co-located at the site of that data center. Wind and solar require substantial acreage; it is unrealistic to mandate their construction adjacent to each data center. This provision essentially creates dependence on fossil fuel energy sources. Energy from those sources would exacerbate climate change, the very crisis renewable energy sources are meant to overcome.

Second, AB840/SB843 has no requirement for a planning process that assures Wisconsin residents and businesses of a healthy, sustainable and prosperous future. The project-by-project approach to addressing multiple infrastructure issues in Wisconsin totally ignores the interconnected nature of energy, water, natural and human resources. The League supports comprehensive planning that must consider “the inherent characteristics and carrying capacities of each area’s natural resources.” While this bill calls for “closed loop cooling” to reduce the direct water requirements of a data center, it does not address all water required to energize that facility nor the heat island likely to develop from the fans used to cool the closed loop nor the noise produced with this type of cooling. A comprehensive planning process would include all stakeholders and consider all factors necessary to the operation of the data center.

Because of the foregoing, the LWVWI opposes AB840/SB843.