



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF PENNSYLVANIA

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January 26, 2010

To: Members of the Senate Environmental Resources
and Energy Committee

From: Olivia Thorne, President
League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania

RE: Wastewater Treatment

As you reflect on the testimony to be given on your upcoming January 27th hearing regarding wastewater issues relative to Marcellus Shale drilling for natural gas, please review the attached document. It was crafted to summarize our response to the request of Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection for comments on proposed amendments to 25 PA Chapter 95 relating to Wastewater Treatment Requirements that will govern discharges of high Total Dissolved Solids (TDS), chlorides and sulfates. The summary includes comments and recommendations.

The League is appreciative of the opportunity to provide input as we continue to support measures that reduce pollution in order to protect surface water, ground water and drinking supplies throughout the Commonwealth.

For access to our five study guides, including *Study Guide II Marcellus Shale Natural Gas: Environmental Impact*, and extensive references on natural gas extraction from Marcellus Shale, please go to www.lwv.pa.

Attachment (1)

**Comments of
The League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania
Proposed Amendments to 25 Pa. Chapter 95 relating to Wastewater
Treatment Requirements**

The League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania views the proposed regulations that would limit new, large, high-TDS (Total Dissolved Solids) dischargers, total chlorides and total sulfates as an important step in improving the water quality in the Commonwealth. High concentrations of TDS have caused problems for both industrial users and public water suppliers who draw from our rivers and streams.

Given the increasing amount of wastewater created by the growth in Marcellus Shale drilling and other sources, the LWVPA opposes the weakening of the proposed regulations and any extension of the implementation timeline.

The LWVPA has three recommendations to strengthen DEP's proposed standards.

- First, the TDS effluent standard should be changed ideally to a **daily maximum** or, at the least, a **maximum daily average**. A monthly average will not adequately protect drinking water and aquatic life against spikes of highly concentrated discharges. The best available technology should be used to monitor TDS effluent on a frequent basis. Dilution has proven to be an unreliable remedy for these multiple sources of pollution.
- Second, all TDS dischargers, both large and small, should be covered by the standard, particularly those that discharge any TDS concentration greater than 500 mg/L.
- Third, existing dischargers need to be covered as soon as possible or, at the least, when their permits are renewed. New sources and new discharges at existing sources should be covered immediately.

The LWVPA believes that the assimilative capacity, of our waters and streams should not be considered an appropriate treatment for industrial wastes. Strong standards can promote the development and implementation of the technology to treat high TDS wastes safely and economically.

We request that the Environmental Quality Board review its regulations for toxic wastes and support the development of a comprehensive monitoring system to identify contaminants, insure their proper treatment, and track water used, re-used, and discharged. Pennsylvania's history shows that failure to regulate in the present will cost taxpayers exponentially more for future cleanup and remediation. Furthermore, weak standards will encourage importation of waste water from other states, increasing the amount of TDS emissions in our waters.