



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF PENNSYLVANIA**

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**League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania
Comments to the
Citizens Advisory Council of the
Department of Environmental Protection
November 18, 2014**

Good day. I am Celeen Miller of the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania for whom I am speaking. Public comment at advisory meetings is an important venue for public participation that is highly valued and appreciated by the League. As we reviewed today's agenda and the related attachments, we would like to highlight the following areas for your consideration:

- As new members to this Council are appointed, the League encourages each of you to keep in mind the awesome responsibility you hold in representing and advocating for the citizens of this Commonwealth. We trust you will act as trustees of our rights to clean air, pure water, and the preservation of natural resources for generations yet to come. We are also grateful to those who have ably served in this role.
- We are eager to hear about the Department's educational grants. Through increasing awareness and expanding public knowledge, these efforts serve as the foundation for informed participation in decision-making processes, a basic tenet of the League.
- On reviewing the DEP Report, it is obvious that this agency is currently juggling a substantial number of significant matters. Of particular concern are the revised oil and gas regulations under which we continue to operate.
- To continue large scale and expanding operations that merely require compliance with outdated rules fails to address current technologies and places our environment and public health under increasing risk.
- With the growing industrialization in Pennsylvania's forests, plant regulations are an important consideration. In addition to protecting native plants in sensitive environments, it is also imperative to address fragmentation from pipelines and prevent invasive species from jeopardizing our native flora.
- The League applauds the efforts of the public participation committee in addressing practical issues fundamental to improved effectiveness and efficiency. We hope that best practices listed within the report are adopted by the advisory committees to optimize the important role that each of these groups play in promoting good government.

Finally, as many of you know, our members from throughout the Commonwealth have studied natural gas extraction from Marcellus Shale and have adopted a position through consensus. Two areas we support are

1. Research on the effects of natural gas extraction from Marcellus Shale on the economy, environment and public health of Pennsylvanians; and
2. An efficient and effective oversight system for reporting potential violations and accidents.

Thus we are here to raise your awareness of a recent report about the lack of adequate, accessible data regarding the number, location, and nature of over 500 frack ponds from natural gas operations is alarming. The hazardous consequences of such an oversight are difficult to fathom. While DEP classifications and regulations may differ based on size, the lack of comprehensive reporting of impoundments may make issues such as orphaned and abandoned wells pale by comparison. How can comprehensive studies on the impact of natural gas operations on health be conducted without such information? We urge that you collectively and individually advocate for a better system of tracking waste impoundments in our Commonwealth. Time is of the essence.

Thank you for your consideration.