

DRAFT

Bonita Hoke, Executive Director  
League of Women Voters of PA  
226 Forster St.  
Harrisburg, PA 17102-3220

Dear Ms. Hoke;

Thank you for presenting the League of Women Voters testimony before the Department of Environmental Protection Citizens Advisory Council and I'd like to respond to several issues.

The CAC is the only legislatively mandated advisory committee with the comprehensive charge to review all environmental legislation, regulations, and policies affecting the Department of Environmental Protection. As such, the Council endeavors to bring a collective view of the public interest in environmental protection and natural resources and possesses a diversity of personal experiences and perspectives. Public comments during Council meetings add to that collective view.

Council intends to draw upon the testimony from the League as we review the various public participation guidance documents utilized by the Department in permit decisions, regulation development and environmental justice discussions. We encourage the League to also submit comments directly to the Department as each of these important documents are opened for public comment.

Council agrees with the League that the public should be assured adequate opportunity to review and provide comments on projects the Department is reviewing. This is tempered with a concern that the mechanism of inclusion in the permit review process is not misused as a forum to delay or defeat projects that otherwise meet environmental protection requirements.

Regarding the balance between surface and subsurface mining rights - Council reviewed the latest Bituminous Mine Subsidence and Land Conservation Act (Act 54) report and provided extensive comments to the Department and to the Legislature on June 13, 2012. Significant among the recommendations was the conclusion that it is time to revisit the Act. A copy of that review is attached and is also posted on the CAC website at \_\_\_\_\_.

Following the various aspects of natural gas development in the Commonwealth has also been on Council's radar. However, I suspect that we will not take up the issue of private water well testing or adequate staffing levels until after the Auditor General completes his review of these same issues.

We share the League's enthusiasm for the Department's pledge of transparency in its actions and have offered Council's considerable experience and expertise to assist them in meeting that commitment.

Sincerely, Marjorie Hughes

CC: Secretary Krancer