



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF PENNSYLVANIA

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The League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania
Public Comment to the
Citizens Advisory Council of the Department of Environmental Protection
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
July 21, 2015

Good morning. I am Susan Carty, President of the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania. This month, the League is interested in three areas on your agenda.

First, given our long-standing advocacy based on Article 1, Section 27 of the Pennsylvania Constitution and our adopted natural resource positions¹, we are eager to learn about the status of Chesapeake Bay. Pennsylvania is a prime source of its waters. As you reflect on today's presentation, please consider that this agency has a critical role in supporting our position of promoting an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the **public** interest.

Secondly, the League's historical concern for and involvement with long-wall mining practices and policies. Now, thanks to the most recent report, the data is available to document the loss of our most precious resource - water. In fact, forty per cent of the streams undermined by underground coal mining suffered flow loss or pooling. Eight of the 55 stream sections that were impacted and identified in the 2003-2008 report have yet to recover. We are optimistic that today's report will call for the revision of Act 54 to cease the negative consequences of long wall mining on aquatic chemistry, water life, and the vital ecological balance in nature. Prevention rather than mitigation should be our focus.

Third, the purpose of the League of Women Voters in promotion of political responsibility through informed and active participation in government and in action on selected governmental issues. An appropriate venue for public participation is vital to our democracy. We trust Ms. Tate's report will be instructive as we continue to encourage the citizens of Pennsylvania to become actively involved in government at the local, state and national levels.

Finally, the League is pleased that the Department has established a Pipeline Infrastructure Task Force to recommend and define a series of best practices for these growing operations. We trust this stakeholder group will mirror many of the documented recommendations developed at the

¹ See <http://lwv.org/content/natural-resources>

federal level through a similar stakeholder group – the Pipeline Informed Planning Alliance.² , In January of this year, the Pipeline Hazardous Materials Safety Administration and the Federal Energy Management Agency released a new guidance document produced by the PIPA Communication team entitled *Hazard Mitigation Planning: Practices of Land Use Planning and Development near Pipelines*.³ It outlines best practices for communities to reduce risks of pipeline incidents, including those caused by natural forces.

The League is grateful for this opportunity to share our comments with you. Thank you for your consideration.

² The Pipelines and Informed Planning Alliance (PIPA) is a stakeholder initiative led and supported by the U.S. Department of Transportation's **Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA)**.

³ See <https://primis.phmsa.dot.gov/comm/pipa/landuseplanning.htm>