



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF PENNSYLVANIA**

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Public Comment of the
League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania
Citizens Advisory Council of the
Department of Environmental Protection
January 21, 2015

Happy New Year from the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania! I am Roberta Winters and I will be providing comments for the League today. There are three issues of on-going importance on your agenda today.

First, there is the implementation of Act 162 of 2014. As you may recall, this legislation weakens forested riparian buffer requirements in Pennsylvania's most pristine watersheds. We would hope that today's presentation will include ways in which the Commonwealth intends to comply with national anti-degradation and Chesapeake Bay restoration standards. Further the League urges the Department of Environmental Protection to protect landowners and taxpayers from unintended costs and consequences resulting from this action.

Secondly, the League has long-standing concerns about Act 54 and its on-going consequences. Based on the present and existing reports and, in some instances, your own, first-hand tours of sites impacted by long-wall mining, the verdict is conclusive. Long-wall mining can and has irreparably and irreversibly altered the hydrogeology of impacted lands. In spite of costly and extensive mitigation efforts, streams have stopped flowing. Laws must be written to prevent such environmental harm and not written for industrial operators to throw money at unsolvable problems that have resulted. Fines cannot compensate for the loss of the natural resources of our Commonwealth that are protected by our Article 1, Section 27 of our Constitution to which are elected and appointed officials are sworn to uphold. As our environment and, particularly our ground and source waters, becomes increasingly stressed by a myriad of factors, the time for each of you to advocate and recommend the revision and/or elimination of Act 54 is **now**.

Finally, as you look to new business, there are several issues that we would hope that the Department might pursue to protect our land, air, and water. First, there is the recently released TENORM in the Oil and Gas Industry study report.¹ Please act promptly so that

¹http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/oil___gas_related_topics/20349/radiation_protection/986697

recommendations can be pursued and further data collected – particularly at well pads and in leachate of potentially impacted landfills. Second, there is the recent Duke study indicating that iodide and ammonia are being released into our waterway.² The toxic substances that are extracted from geological formations as a result of natural gas and oil drilling and our contaminating our water by accident and by treatment facilities inadequately designed to handle these contaminants. This issue requires immediate regulatory attention and action. Finally, the League believes the construction of Elcon Recycling Services, L.L.C.'s hazardous chemical waste treatment and storage facility in Falls Township would put the drinking, cooking and bathing water of millions of people downstream at risk.³ We thus urge you, as members of the Council and those in the Department of Environmental Protection, to conduct an environmental impact study prior to action on the proposed site application.

Thank you for your on-going consideration of our concerns as you use the beginning of this new year to resolve to achieve your mission as related to Article 1, Section 27 of the Pennsylvania Constitution.

² Reported in <http://www.post-gazette.com/news/environment/2015/01/20/Ammonium-iodide/stories/201501150203>

³ <http://levittownnow.com/2014/12/11/residents-voice-concerns-hazardous-waste-facility-falls/>