

WATER RESOURCES**(Further Guidelines and Criteria, LWVUS Impact on Issues, 2006-2008, pp. 49-50)**

Since 1965, League members have had a continuing interest in water issues leading in 1997 to our state position on WATERSHED PROTECTION. We continue to push for legislation protecting the state's waters. Members serve on water resource advisory committees at all levels. The League works with other environmental and conservation groups statewide to support regulations conserving our resources and protecting the riverine systems (all source waters that lead to a river system) to prevent overuse and pollution. We support statewide strategies as well as financial aid that would rehabilitate water supplies, cleanup wastewater, eliminate watershed threats, meter all sources, and oversee water discharge permits.

As a result, of our position supporting regional management of water resources, the League created:

- The Lake Erie Basin Committee composed of Leagues from New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Michigan.
- The Tri-State Committee (before 1996 - it was the Tri-State League) composed of members from the New York Metropolitan area, New Jersey and Connecticut.

These organizations monitor and advise on water management in their areas. They have alerted other Leagues to take action on legislation or problems that affect their water basins. We support funding for the Great Lakes Commission, and are following the proposed Great Lakes Water Initiative (better known as the Great Lakes Water "Guidance"). The Guidance will result in a major change in NY's water regulations. For the first time terrestrial and aquatic resources will have to be taken into consideration when considering regulations. Until 1997, human impact was the only consideration guiding the regulatory process. The importance of the whole ecosystem in maintaining human health is just receiving the attention it deserves.

Through the Tri-State League, we supported the Interstate Sanitation Commission (ISC) which advocates for improved water quality through regulation enforcement, research and monitoring for the Long Island Sound, lower Hudson River Valley and other tri-state waters.

At the 1995 Convention, the League adopted a mini-study: "*Need For Measures to Achieve Watershed Protection for Drinking Water, Including Pesticide Issues.*" The basis for this study was the BOCC League watershed study, which was adopted for concurrence by the Westchester ILO. Upon examination of issue, this study was expanded to two years.

**NEED FOR MEASURES TO ACHIEVE WATERSHED PROTECTION
OF DRINKING WATER, INCLUDING PESTICIDE ISSUES.**

Statement of Position

As announced by the State Board, April 1997

The League of Women Voters of New York State's position is based on the League of Women Voters of the United States water resources position in support of:

- **Water resource programs and policies that reflect the interrelationships of water quality, water quantity, ground water, and surface water and that address the potential depletion or pollution of water supplies;**

**NEED FOR MEASURES TO ACHIEVE WATERSHED PROTECTION
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- **Stringent controls to protect the quality of current and potential drinking water supplies, including protection of watersheds for surface supplies and recharge areas for ground water.**

New York should continue to set standards, determine classifications, and issue permits; in addition, localities may impose more stringent permit limits than the state standard.

The League supports state enforcement compliance with a strong role for county and local government.

In New York State the quantity of water is not an issue; however, there is a need for comprehensive ecosystem management within each watershed. This should include a regional approach to water regulation. League members recognize that management of water supplies will entail higher costs and restrictions.

Additionally, they recognize the need for strengthened contingency plans to provide for alternative supplies of water.

Water quality in New York State is adequate but threatened. Therefore members support strong regulations to reduce nonpoint source pollution. There is a need for education and technical assistance to address issues of best management practices to control nonpoint source pollution. Best management practices should be applied to all sources of nonpoint pollution.

The League supports:

- **A regional watershed approach requiring regulations that cross municipal boundaries;**
- **Requiring communities to keep their water and sewage infrastructure in good working condition;**
- **Limiting the use of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers; and**
- **Improving coordination between the various agencies charged to protect our drinking water supplies.**

The League is opposed to any proposal by the state for self-monitoring and/or self-determined compliance for water regulations.

In 1998, the NYS Department of Health's Bureau of Public Water Supply Protection began the development of a Source Water Assessment Plan (SWAP) as per the guidelines issued by the US Environmental Protection Agency. Future federal funding for source water protection will require that an approved assessment program be implemented. Millie Whalen, LWVNY's Natural Resources off-board specialist served on the Public Policy Participation working group of the SWAP advisory

NATURAL RESOURCES

IMPACT ON ISSUES 2005-2007

62 Grand Street, Albany, New York 12207*Telephone: 518-465-4162*Fax: 518-465-0812

E-mail: lwnvny@lwnvny.org*Website: www.lwnvny.org

committee. This working group was responsible for determining the most effective methods for facilitating public participation. Local Leagues were encouraged to participate in the development of the plan via the DOH's teleconference and public meetings held throughout the state. The SWAP was completed in 2000.