

July 28, 2011

Lisa P. Jackson, Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Ariel Rios Building
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington D.C. 20460

Re: Restoring the Clean Water Act and ensuing Safe Drinking Water Act 33 U.S.C. Section 1251 et seq (1972)

Dear Ms. Jackson:

The Leagues of Women Voters of Delaware, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania request that you record our support for the comprehensive plan to clean up the waterways in our respective states and across America as part of the public comment period for docket number EPAHQOW20110409.

Restoring the Clean Water Act is critical to states where extraction of natural gas from Marcellus Shale is threatening or could threaten rivers, streams and wetlands. The League of Women Voters maintains a national position on Natural Resources that calls for the promotion of *an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest. In specific regard to Water Resources, this position supports measures to reduce pollution in order to protect surface water, groundwater and drinking water.*

The League further supports *legislation and regulation that provides for transparency in all aspects of the exploration and drilling for, and production of gas, including the elimination from national legislation of the exemptions for drilling.* To this end, closing the Halliburton loophole is critical. Without full disclosure of the chemicals used in high volume hydraulic fracturing lifecycle, it is not possible to test, monitor, and regulate with certainty these unknown substances, their potential interactions, and their cumulative long-term impact on our finite and most valuable natural resource—water: this in the context of an ever-increasing population.

Throughout America waterways have been compromised by the pollution of excess nutrients, siltation, and metals from agricultural runoff and abandoned mine drainage. High volume hydraulic fracturing combines drinkable water from our finite water supply with such additives as salt, brine, sand, and any number of combinations of hundreds of undisclosed chemicals, many of which are scientifically categorized as toxic, carcinogenic or endocrine disruptors, among other things. As a result, America's waterways and wetlands are being further degraded by incidents related to the natural gas extraction process from Marcellus shale and other shale plays across the country.

Wetlands and streams represent the first line of defense in flood protection and water filtration. As documented cases of pollutants seeping into groundwater and waterways increase, the importance of redefining wetlands and small streams has become critical to protect drinking water.

The integrity of America's water supply relates directly to the health of each American, our cattle and our crops. Since water knows no boundaries across state lines, seeking to regulate water at the state level while necessary is not sufficient to protect the nation's environment and public health. Americans are therefore, dependent on efforts at the federal level to protect our waters. Comprehensive federal regulation is essential to support the work of state agencies authorized to protect our environment. The strength, scope, and specificity of federal standards bolster efforts at all levels to safeguard our rivers, streams and private and public drinking water.

Further, the viability of the Safe Drinking Water Act depends on the Clean Water Act. Both statutes, without special exemptions are fundamental to our welfare as individuals, to the maintenance of a healthy ecosystem, and to America's national security.

In order to protect the health and welfare of the citizens of the United States and the environment, it is vital to restore all aspects of the Clean Water Act. On behalf of our members and generations yet to come, we thank you for providing guidance through *Identifying Waters Protected by the Clean Water Act*.

Sincerely,
Carol Jones, President
League of Women Voters of Delaware

Toni Zimmer, President
League of Women Voters of New Jersey

Betsey Swan, President
League of Women Voters of New York

Olivia Thorne, President
League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania