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## Comments on the Draft 2025 South Carolina State Water Plan, Third Edition

### League of Women Voters of South Carolina

By Email to [WaterSC@des.sc.gov](mailto:WaterSC@des.sc.gov)

The League of Women Voters of South Carolina appreciates the opportunity to comment on the draft water plan for our state provided by the SC Department of Environmental Services (SC DES). Addressing responsible water management is essential for the future of our state. We face major challenges from changing patterns of water use and from the variable conditions in our environmentally diverse state.

We are concerned about the possibility that the potential for water demand growth in the coming years has been underestimated. Understandably, this study relied heavily on data from the period through 2023 (for example, Fig. 4.3). However, this was prior to the current explosive growth in data center facilities. Most of these new facilities will rely on very high-volume water use for cooling. In addition, electrical generation demands (already a substantial component of use figures) are growing quickly in direct response to these data center demands. The planned Dominion-Santee Cooper plant at Canadys is an obvious example.

Some of these facilities are to be located in areas with low current population and little expectation of residential or industrial growth, for example the St. George area in upper Dorchester County. Water use projections based upon modest growth in residential numbers and industrial activity may lead to significant underestimates of future water demands. Competition with agricultural and residential users for water is inevitable if there is not adequate regulation based on sound and comprehensive data.

We recommend intensive monitoring of the quantity and quality of on-going water use, including both surface and ground water. There should be no exceptions for corporations that claim their water use is a "trade secret." South Carolina must achieve better understanding of actual and projected water use and no user should be exempt.

In addition, the General Assembly must move to pass legislation to establish effective regulation of water use informed by the varying conditions in the watersheds in our state. Should some users oppose either better data acquisition or enhanced regulatory measures, as some have in the past, they endanger their own access to the water that they require to function.

Again, we appreciate very much the opportunity to comment on this draft water plan and commend those who worked on it, both those in SC DES and other participants. The rapidly increasing need for stronger monitoring and regulatory processes that we ask for were not so apparent even a year ago. We look forward to seeing the final form of this report and the impact that it will have.

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