



**Energy and Technology Committee
Public Hearing
March 10, 2009**

Submitted by: Lynn Taborsak, Climate Change Specialist
Comments in support of
HB 6635: AAC Solar Power

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut, comprised of over 2,100 members across the state, is a non-partisan, political organization committed to effective public policy through education and action. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on a plan to provide long-term, stable funding and incentives for renewable solar power generation in our state.

The League wholeheartedly believes that we need governmental policies and action that promote renewable energy, ease peak electric demand and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Solar power uniquely fulfills these policy requirements. It is one of the most abundant resources we have to wean Connecticut of its reliance on ozone depleting fossil fuels.

There are provisions in HB 6635 for all users. Solar energy panels can provide homeowners, small businesses, non-profits and municipalities with relief from rising utility costs. There are also incentives for utility companies to create large solar installations connected to the grid. HB 6635 challenges us to produce 5% of our peak energy demand, or 370 megawatts of clean, renewable power, by the year 2020.

We know from past experience that rebates and incentives to reduce energy costs for homes and businesses are not only popular, they are oversubscribed. Connecticut Innovations, Inc. stopped taking applications for solar panel rebates in late 2008 after completing 903 photovoltaic projects. They stopped taking applications for on-site distributed generation [OSDG] in January 2009. We need to ensure that funds for energy conservation, energy efficiency and renewable energy are adequate for the demand and that they are protected in a "lockbox" and not used to balance the state budget. Unleashing the robust demand for solar projects with the incentives in this proposal can provide new jobs and growth for Connecticut's economy.