



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CONNECTICUT, INC.

**CGA Commerce Committee
February 24, 2011 Public Hearing
Opposition to:
RB 1020 AAC Water Resources and Economic Development
Testimony by Cheryl Dunson, Drinking Water Specialist**

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut, a statewide organization with nearly 2,000 members, has a strong position in support of policies and programs that protect our state's watercourses and watershed lands. Further, the League believes that efficient government requires competent personnel, clear assignment of responsibility, and adequate coordination among the different agencies of government.

Based upon these longstanding positions, we urge you to oppose RB1020 because the bill would circumvent the established Regulation Review process and block much-needed and overdue reforms to protect streamflows.

The passage and signing of Public Act 05-142 An Act Concerning The Minimum Water Flow Regulations required significant multi-year negotiation and compromise to achieve. Since the passage in 2005, the Department of Environmental Protection undertook a five year effort to develop regulations consistent with the law by seeking input from and balancing needs among a wide variety of stakeholders including public officials, water utility representatives, land use lawyers, real estate agents, developers and environmental advocates. After 10-years of work, it would be extraordinarily wasteful and inefficient to taxpayers to "start from scratch" by establishing a totally new process for adoption of overdue regulations to protect our water resources. By amendment to our State's constitution in 1982, the Legislative Regulation Review Committee reviews and adopts or rejects regulations proposed by state agencies.

Specific provisions of concern include undefined exemptions (what does "not financially viable" mean?); repetitive processes (why propose a new process for the creation of new classification process when a negotiated classification process was already proposed?); "grounds for dismissal" (allows for an easy reversal of a protective classification for economic development without recognition of competing needs for wildlife and recreation).

League of Women Voters of Connecticut was among the co-sponsors of the 2005 Conference "Water Law In Connecticut: Balancing Needs for Fish and Faucet." All agreed that water is an essential, yet limited, resource and it is allocated through a patchwork of policies that don't fit together well.

After 10 years of work, we do not need another process or provisions which fail to provide balance among competing needs for our water resources. We urge you to oppose RB 1020.