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**CGA Appropriations Committee**

PUBLIC HEARING Monday, March 2, 2015

**HB 6824: AAC THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH 2017, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR AND OTHER PROVISIONS RELATED TO REVENUE**

**Support for Funding for the Council on Environmental Quality**

Comments submitted by Carolyn Bayne, Natural Resources Director, LWVCT

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**The League of Women Voters of Connecticut is a non-partisan statewide organization comprised of 1600 members in 27 local chapters who are committed to effective public policy and the active participation of citizens in their government.**

The League has long supported policies to ensure the existence of strong, effective, independent watchdog agencies for the state, including support for the allocation of resources necessary for these watchdogs to fulfill their responsibilities.

An equal position of the League is support for policies and procedures that promote comprehensive long-range planning for conservation and development of the state's valuable water resources and lands, including both open space and agricultural lands.

Once again, the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), the watchdog for the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, is targeted for elimination despite its most modest budget and its track record of efficient, effective operation. CEQ is the independent agency that assesses the condition of the state's environmental programs and recommends actions for correcting deficiencies in them. CEQ also reviews environmental impacts of large state-funded construction projects and investigates allegations of environmental law violations. The public depends on CEQ for fair, responsible oversight of our critical environment. It is important that CEQ remain an independent agency, and we therefore urge support for its continued budget.

We appreciate the opportunity to offer our comments on this matter.