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CGA General Law Committee

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Support For:

**HB-5429: AAC PHARMACIES AND COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL OF UNWANTED
MEDICATION**

Comments submitted by Carolyn Bayne, Natural Resources Director, LWVCT

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 of Women Voters of Connecticut supports House Bill No. 5429, which would require the Commissioner of Consumer Protection to establish a voluntary program for the collection and disposal of unused pharmaceuticals by pharmacies. The League has long supported policies and procedures which promote comprehensive long-range planning for the conservation of water resources. While the primary objective of this bill is to reduce harm from accidental exposure or intentional misuse of such drugs, it will also improve water quality.

The process of getting rid of expired, unwanted or unused prescription drugs can be confusing and have unintended, undesirable, consequences. In the absence of a take-back program, the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) recommends disposing of such prescription drugs either in the trash (after first taking certain precautions) or – for drugs where even one dose could prove harmful or fatal if ingested by someone other than the person it was intended for – flushed down the sink or toilet. The list of drugs in this latter category currently numbers more than three-dozen, and the drugs can present in variable form such as tablets, capsules, patches or oral solutions. Unsure how to properly dispose of any given drug, many consumers opt to flush all drugs. Traces of

most drugs flushed make it through the sewage treatment process and into waterways, where they can disrupt the biology and behavior of fish and other aquatic life, even at extremely low concentrations (parts per billion).

Take-back programs provide a simple, convenient way for consumers to dispose of expired, unwanted or unused medications safely and responsibly. Such programs can be one-day collection events, mail-back programs, or ongoing drop-offs, which House Bill No. 5429 provides for. Ongoing drop-offs, most often set up at police stations, pharmacies, or through community or local government agencies, are the most convenient, cost-effective and secure approach, and therefore the most successful. Other elements that will likely ensure the success of this program are the requirement that it be developed in consultation with the Commission of Pharmacy and the Connecticut Pharmacists Association, that participation by pharmacies is voluntary, and the development of a public awareness campaign to educate the public concerning the dangers of unsafe disposal of pharmaceuticals and of the availability of the pharmaceutical collection and disposal program.

The League, therefore, supports House Bill No. 5429 and urges its passage.

We appreciate the opportunity to offer our comments.