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## **CGA Environment Committee**

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### **Support for:**

R.S.B. No. 103: AAC HYDRAULIC FRACTURING WASTE IN CONNECTICUT

Comments submitted by Carolyn Bayne, Water Resources Specialist, 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.**

Senator Kennedy, Senator Miner, Representative Demicco and distinguished members of the Environment Committee:

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut supports Raised Senate Bill No. 103, which prohibits the receipt, collection, storage, treatment, transfer or disposal of waste from hydraulic fracturing (“fracking”) in Connecticut. The League has long supported state policies and programs which promote comprehensive long-range planning for the conservation of water resources. This bill, if enacted, would help to safeguard the state’s groundwater, rivers, streams, lakes, aquifers and Long Island Sound from possible exposure to the highly toxic chemicals and other hazardous materials found in fracking waste. Safe drinking water is vital not only to the health of Connecticut’s residents, but clean and safe water is also critical to a productive and growing economy.

Connecticut does not have the geology to support hydraulic fracturing, but fracking waste is nevertheless a critical issue for our state. Vast fields of natural gas exist - and are being fracked - in neighboring states situated over the Marcellus Shale. Pennsylvania alone has more than 8,000 active wells. Estimates vary on how many millions of gallons of water and chemicals are used to fracture each well and what percentage of it flows back, but there is no question that the volume of drilling overwhelms existing waste-handling infrastructure. Consequently, fracking waste is “shopped around” to other states - either to be treated or repurposed as de-icing agents for roads or mixed in with landfill.

Fracking waste can be either solid (drill cuttings, sediments and sludge) or liquid (drilling fluids, flowback and produced waters). The composition and concentration of toxicity in the waste can vary depending on chemicals used, geographic region where drilling takes place, whether it was reused for fracturing additional wells, and how long the wastewater was underground.

Several hundred different types of chemicals can be used in fracking, including corrosion inhibitors, surfactants, scale inhibitors, biocides and friction reducers. Under current Pennsylvania law, drillers are not required to disclose the chemicals they use, and most consider it proprietary information and do not. In addition to toxic chemicals, most wastewater from drilling in the Marcellus Shale contains high concentrations of salt, metals, and radioactive materials. Such wastes are classified as “industrial waste” under federal law, which allows gas companies to transport and dispose of them without handling or treating them as the hazardous wastes that they are. Accidents, leaks, and spills involving vehicles transporting waste are not uncommon and runoff from such incidents increases contamination of surface and groundwater.

Some wastewater will be reused in future operations, depending on the level of pollutants and proximity of other fracturing sites. Eventually it will need to be transported to either Class II underground injection wells or wastewater treatment facilities, where it will be treated and discharged into surface water.

The geography of the northeast makes it difficult and costly to drill injection wells here, but there are treatment plants in Connecticut potentially interested in handling the waste from hydraulic fracturing. Most wastewater treatment facilities are not designed to handle wastewater with high concentrations of salts or radioactivity several times the federal drinking water standards. **Since it may be difficult, if not impossible, for waste treatment facilities to properly remove known or possible human carcinogens from fracking waste that could contaminate drinking water sources, a permanent prohibition on the receipt, collection, storage, treatment, transfer or disposal of fracking waste is necessary.**

It should be noted that as Pennsylvania frantically seeks solutions to managing its waste from hydraulic fracturing, actions have been undertaken in nearby states to either ban fracking waste (Vermont), enact lengthy moratoriums (Massachusetts) or otherwise severely restrict (New York) the importation of fracking waste. These actions clearly have implications for Connecticut if it remains one of the few states in close proximity to drilling activities in the Marcellus Shale to accept by-products of hydraulic fracturing.

**The League, therefore, supports Raised Senate Bill No. 103 and urges its passage.**

We appreciate the opportunity to offer our comments.