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THE LEAGUE
OF WOMEN VOTERS
of New York State

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE
NEW YORK STATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

Senator Antoine Thompson, Chairman

September 29, 2009

Buffalo, New York

Good Afternoon, my name is JoAnn Ross, Director of Citizen Education of the League of Women Voters of New York State and New York representative on the LWV Lake Erie Basin Committee, an inter-state committee that addresses Water and Watershed concerns. I would like to begin by thanking Senator Thompson and the members of the New York Standing Committee on Environmental Conversation for conducting this hearing on the issue of Clean Water in New York State.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political membership organization that encourages informed and active participation in governments, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influences public policy through education and advocacy. The League has over fifty local Leagues statewide. In New York State, League members have had a continuing interest in water issues since 1965, which lead to the development of our 1997 state position on Watershed Protection.

The League position includes the development and implementation of stringent controls to protect the quality of current and potential drinking water supplies; including protection of watersheds for surface supplies and recharge areas for ground water.

New York State should continue to set standards, determine classifications, and issue permits; in addition, *localities should be able to impose more stringent permit limits* that the state standard.

The League supports state enforcement compliance with a strong role for county and local government.

In New York State the quantity of water is not an issue, however, there is a need for comprehensive ecosystem management within each watershed. This should include a regional approach to water regulations. We recognize that management of water supplies will entail higher costs and restrictions.

The water quality in New York State is threatened by sources of nonpoint pollution. The League supports strong regulations to reduce nonpoint source pollution. There is a need for education and

technical assistance to address issues of best management practices to control nonpoint source pollution. Best management practices should be applied to all sources of nonpoint pollution.

Specifically, the League supports:

- A regional watershed approach requiring regulations that cross municipal boundaries;
- Requiring communities to keep their water and sewage infrastructure in good working condition;
- Limiting the use of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers; and
- Improving coordination between the various agencies charged to protect our drinking water supplies.

The League is opposed to any proposal prepared by the state for self-monitoring and/or self determined compliance for water regulation.

All New York residents have the right to clean water. The League of Women Voters of New York State encourages you to move into the forefront on this important issue and thanks you for the opportunity to present our position.