



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

MICHIGAN

EDUCATING AND ADVOCATING FOR RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT

EPA Docket Center
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Mail Code 28221T
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

RE: Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OW-2013-0710

December 11, 2013

The League of Women Voters of Michigan opposed the proposed changes to Michigan's wetland permitting program in SB 163. Wetlands provide clean water, flood protection, healthy fish and abundant wildlife. They function as an interconnected system, so it isn't possible to exclude parts of one system from regulation without impacting the health and optimal functioning of the whole. Public Act 98 redefines wetlands, adds exemptions, authorizes conditional permits before a hearing process and shifts additional burden on the Department of Environmental Quality.

We call on the EPA's leadership and technical and financial assistance to assure that Michigan maintains the Federal standards of the Clean Water Act. The League of Women Voters supports the shared protection and management of natural resources by all levels of government. The Federal government has set minimum standards, and honors a state's right to set more stringent standards. Attempts to weaken wetland protection by the Michigan legislature should be rebuffed. We call on our Federal government to enforce existing, strong standards.

Michigan has long been regarded as a leader in resource protection. We ask your assistance in guiding the state back to assuming their responsibilities to protect the public's interest in the functions and values that wetlands provide. Michigan must resolve the inconsistencies created by Public Act 98. Additional inspection and monitoring of the state's enforcement policies must stay in place until they are in compliance.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Susan Smith, President
League of Women Voters of Michigan