



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TEXAS

TESTIMONY
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TEXAS
Senate Agriculture, Water, and Rural Affairs Committee
Monday, April 3, 2017

I am Jane MacFarland, testifying as a member and on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Texas in **opposition to SB 225**. We appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today. Thank you for allowing us to share the League of Women Voters of Texas position on this bill.

Our position on water permitting, like other League positions, is derived through a lengthy and thoughtful process involving the participation of 25 local Leagues representing more than 5,000 members and supporters throughout the state of Texas.

Although the author states that he intends only to streamline the process, SB 225 would dangerously weaken the permitting and appeal process in place for surface water permits and amendments from the TCEQ.

1. The bill requires TCEQ to estimate time limits for the appeals process. TCEQ cannot control the timing of SOHA hearings and should not be made responsible for it.
2. The bill limits the entire appeal process to 270 days. This may or may not be feasible with current staffing.
3. Most distressing of all, the bill limits the number of participants in the appeals process to those who have participated in the original hearing process. This limitation of “standing” may prevent parties acting on behalf of the public at large from sharing vital considerations with the hearings judge.

If the Legislature is really concerned about the length of time it takes to apply for and even to appeal a new water permit, it would be far more sensible and effective to fully fund the TCEQ and SOHA so that adequate personnel could prevent bottlenecks in the system.

The critical value of Texas water resources to the future of the whole state and all its citizens demands that management processes be done with deliberation and care. Thank you.

For additional information, please contact: Mary Ellen Summerlin, Water Issue Chair,
mects@ktc.com 830.895.7982

The League of Women Voters of Texas (LWV-TX) is a nonpartisan citizens' organization that has fought since 1919 to improve our government and engage all citizens in the decisions that impact their lives. It represents more than 5000 members and supporters throughout Texas.

The League of Women Voters never supports or opposes candidates for office or political parties. The member-driven organization of women and men encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and seeks to influence public policy through education and advocacy of positions based on extensive issue study and consensus.