

## COASTAL AND INLAND WETLANDS

(Adopted 1997, Revised 1998)

**The League of Women Voters of Westport supports the Town's current policy for protecting wetlands to "provide an orderly process through which to balance the need for economic growth in Westport, with the need to protect its environment and ecology for the benefit and enjoyment of the people of Westport." In addition, the League supports strong regulation and review of development activities affecting Westport's wetlands.**

### **Explanation:**

#### **1. Application and Hearing process.**

To train Commissioners we support:

- a. town-supported training of Conservation Commissioners through Connecticut's DEP workshops and videos;
- b. local training of Commissioners by staff to include training in the field;
- c. the inclusion, when applicable, of the Conservation Commission in the Town's current Planning & Zoning land use training.

To provide sufficient background information to Commissioners, we support:

- a. neighbor notification and oral and written public input at hearings, in Summary as well as Plenary cases;
- b. the expectation that Commissioners walk properties prior to hearings;
- c. the expectation that agenda and background information be received by Commissioners in a timely fashion.

#### **2. Implementation and Enforcement of Wetland's Regulations.**

We support:

- a. a fee and fines system strong enough to ensure compliance;
  - b. performance bonds for all projects with potential for significant impact on wetlands;
  - c. a requirement that the applicant provide an environmental consultant to monitor and report regularly to the Commission for all projects with potential for significant impact on wetlands;
  - d. frequent inspections by Commissioners and staff to ensure compliance with the regulations;
  - e. a program of public education to include printed information widely available in locations such as town offices, real estate offices and the Library.
3. We support the Commission's inland wetland regulatory responsibilities and, in addition, urge the Commission to refocus on its original mission of conservation.
  4. We urge the Town to implement the Geographic Information System (GIS) to improve the Town's wetlands maps.
  5. We support regular review of the Town's current wetland setback requirements.