



## Why Delaware Needs Clean Water Legislation Now

**The League of Women Voters' positions aim to stop and prevent any ecological degradation.** They also address the potential depletion or pollution of water supplies, the preservation of the physical, chemical and biological integrity of our ecosystem, and maximum protection of public health and the environment. The League also holds that environmental protection and pollution control, including waste management, should be considered a cost of providing a product or service.

Here are just some of the water-related issues facing Delaware:

- **90%** of Delaware's waterways are polluted from excess nutrients and legacy toxics.<sup>1</sup> Pollution sources are created by various industries, agricultural concentrated animal feeding operations, pesticide use, construction, storm water run-off, and improper or inadequate treatment of human and animal waste.
- **\$100 million** is currently the shortage faced by Delaware to address water quality programs.<sup>2</sup>
- **100 miles** of Delaware's waters have fish consumption advisories from high PCBs, metals, and pesticides.<sup>3</sup>
- **1 acre** of tidal wetlands are collectively being lost everyday in the Delaware region.<sup>4</sup>
- **80-100 gallons** of water is used by one person per day according to the U.S. Geological Survey.<sup>5</sup>
- **7 million gallons extra** of wastewater per day will need to be treated to accommodate new residents in Southern Delaware in 20 years.<sup>6</sup>
- **Adverse health effects** of unclean water include gastrointestinal illness, reproductive problems, and neurological disorders. Infants, young children, pregnant women, the elderly, and people whose immune systems are compromised because of AIDS, chemotherapy, or transplant medications, may be especially susceptible to illness from some contaminants.<sup>7</sup>

### Recommendations:

- **Legislation to Clean Up Past Degradation:** The General Assembly should enact legislation in 2019 to repair existing and prevent any new contamination by funding water supply systems, sewage systems and water treatment processing facilities.
- **Sustainable Funding:** The state should establish a dedicated funding source that reflects water usage.
- **Annual Investments:** The General Assembly should provide funding of feasible solutions annually until we can claim to be a Clean Water State.
- **Natural Solutions and Environmental Justice:** When funding clean water projects, the state should prioritize green infrastructure and the needs of underserved communities.<sup>8</sup>
- **Eligibility of Funding:** Owners of businesses that have contributed to pollution should be ineligible for funding but should be required to clean up their own mess.

**We believe that readily available, clean drinking water should be a basic right for every Delawarean. We urge the General Assembly to pass legislation that will ensure the health and safety of all water systems.**

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<sup>1</sup> [Http://cleanwaterdelaware.org/taskforcereports](http://cleanwaterdelaware.org/taskforcereports)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> [Http://cleanwaterdelaware.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Delaware-Cleanwater-Needs-Assessment\\_Cover-and-Main-Report.pdf](http://cleanwaterdelaware.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Delaware-Cleanwater-Needs-Assessment_Cover-and-Main-Report.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> [Http://cleanwaterdelaware.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/PDE-Monitoring-and-Assessment-of-Coastal-Wetlands.pdf](http://cleanwaterdelaware.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/PDE-Monitoring-and-Assessment-of-Coastal-Wetlands.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> The News Journal, 3/24/2019, p. 12A.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/drinking/public/water\\_diseases.html](https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/drinking/public/water_diseases.html)

<sup>8</sup> [Http://cleanwaterdelaware.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/taskforcefindings\\_web.pdf](http://cleanwaterdelaware.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/taskforcefindings_web.pdf) This is a recommendation of Clean Water Delaware which League of Women Voters policy supports.