



THE LEAGUE
OF WOMEN VOTERS®

September 21, 2004

To the Board of Rivanna Water and Sewer Authority:

I am Liz Palmer speaking for the League of Women Voters. Although our brief statement does not fit neatly into the prescribed agenda, we would like to express some concerns about the format and timing of this meeting and the planning that preceded it.

We regret that the format of the meeting does not allow general public discourse to take place. Using breakout groups makes it impossible for everyone's questions, comments, and opinions to be heard by everyone else. Those present will not be able to communicate potentially valuable information in a public setting. Under the circumstances, the most we can ask for is that the meeting be recorded so that all public comments from isolated break-out groups will be made available to the public and to RWSA and their consultants.

In addition, we wonder how meaningful this public meeting can be given that the next meeting with the regulators will be held in two days. These time constraints will limit effective communication by the public in comments written to regulators in the aftermath of the meeting.

We also regret that prior to this meeting comprehensive analysis of the Alternatives did not take place. Therefore, only some information will be available for public comment and several water supply planning issues that we deem important are not likely to be considered. The public has good reason to expect this level of analysis because the Water Supply Plan adopted in 2002 included a commitment to integrated resource planning, watershed management, demand management, an early-warning drought management response, and efforts to balance water uses in order to protect natural resources. By narrowing the discussion to the "Short List of Alternatives", the public will miss an opportunity to engage in discussion in which relevant and essential strategies, such as the impact each alternative would have on the environment, are an integral part of the discourse.

Sincerely,

Lizbeth A. Palmer, DVM
Chair Natural Resources Committee
Charlottesville-Albemarle League of Women Voters