



## LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NORTH CAROLINA

### LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

#### **Drought response action alert:**

##### **Take action: Support stronger drought response!**

The 2007-2008 drought has shown that North Carolina can't take our water resources for granted. In response, this spring, Governor Mike Easley and the state environmental agency put together a package of proposals to better protect our communities and businesses from future droughts. That package has been introduced as H2499, Drought/ Water Management Recommendations, sponsored by Rep. Lucy Allen (Franklin-D). (There's a Senate version of the bill, S1879, sponsored by Sen. Dan Clodfelter (Mecklenburg-D), but the House bill is the one likely to move).

Some highlights: H2499 will require better reporting of water use by agricultural users; prohibit water rate structures that reward people for wasting water; strengthen local and state water supply planning; allow use of gray water on gardens and lawns; encourage water systems to detect and fix leaks; and streamline emergency drought response.

One of the most important – but threatened – parts of H2499 calls for minimum conservation measures that would apply to all water systems in severe, extreme, or exceptional droughts. Until now, it's been up to water systems to decide if or when to require customers to start conserving. Some were responsible, but last year others delayed until far too late, and might currently be running out of water but for unexpectedly heavy rains this spring. Minimum conservation standards would set a floor, ensuring that during a drought, all systems do their part to ensure there's enough water to go around.

Please take a moment to send a message to your state Representatives and Senators urging them to pass strong drought response legislation this summer. There are two points to emphasize: (1) the NC General Assembly should enact H2499 this summer, before adjourning; and (2) minimum conservation measures are a key component of effective drought response.

Thanks for your help on this important issue,

Jeri Gray  
Point person on environmental issues  
League of Women Voters of N.C.

A sample letter is included below. You can find your legislators' email addresses and text of H2499 on the [General Assembly website](#).

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Dear [legislator]:

Please support H2499, Drought/ Water Management Recommendations. The ongoing drought has shown that North Carolina must do a better job of managing our water resources. H2499 takes a number of vital steps to protect the state from future droughts: improving planning, streamlining drought response, and minimizing water waste. I particularly support H2499's 'minimum conservation measures' provision, which would set very basic minimum standards for all water systems in severe, extreme, or exceptional drought. This common sense measure will help ensure that, even in a drought, there's enough water to go around.

Sincerely,

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