UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

AUG 28 1978

OFFICE OF WATER AND
HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Ms. Hester McNulty
Chairperson
Environmental Quality Committee
League of Women Voters of the United States
1730 M Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20036

Dear Ms. McNulty:

Thank you for your letter of July 26, 1978, concerning delays in proposal of new Office of Water and Waste Management public participation regulations.

The unanticipated delay resulted from a review of the proposed regulations by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The Environmental Branch of OMB was concerned about the number and availability of staff within EPA (and other governmental entities) needed to carry out the new regulations, the volume of construction grant funds that would be devoted to public participation under the new regulations, and the need for and reasonableness of requirements which the regulations would place on states and municipalties.

A meeting was scheduled on July 27 to respond to these concerns. At that meeting (and in advance), we provided OMB with detailed analyses of the regulations, information concerning resource demands, data on the projected costs of implementation, and an explanation of how the regulations will most likely be applied to programs other than the construction grants program. At the conclusion of the meeting, OMB agreed that the regulations and resource demands were reasonable and that we could proceed to FEDERAL REGISTER publication.

As you probably know, the proposed regulations were published in the FEDERAL REGISTER on August 7, 1978. (A copy of the text of the FEDERAL REGISTER notice is attached.) Comments on the proposed regulations will be accepted by EPA through October 6, 1978. Information on submission of comments is detailed on page 2 of the attachment with details of other arrangements we have made to encourage public participation in the development of the regulations. I hope that you will utilize this opportunity to provide us with your views.

I am confident that the benefits of a cooperative decision-making process with OMB have more than compensated for the resultant three-week delay. We avoided the possibility of alienating this Federal Agency which oversees and controls our resource commitment for public participation and other programs. OMB did finally concur on the general provisions of the regulations and, after considering the detailed analyses which we provided, on most specific details. Having reached this concensus, EPA will be better able to respond to the extensive public comment which the regulations are already stimulating.

I thank you again for communicating your concerns on this important matter. I know that you share my sense of relief and satisfaction that the regulations are finally proposed. Once again, I encourage you to provide the Agency with your comments on the proposed regulations. We will greatly value your views in redrafting the regulations for final promulgation.

Sincerely,

Thomas C Jorling

Thomas C. Jorling
Assistant Administrator