



WYOMING  
ASSOCIATION  
OF MUNICIPALITIES

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Environmental Quality Council  
Room 1714 Herschler Building  
Cheyenne, WY 82002

Re: Water Quality Rules Chapter 12  
Backflow Prevention

Gentlemen:

We respectfully request that the Environmental Quality Council to support the July 13, 2005 Draft Rule changes to Chapter 12 of the Water Quality Rules and Regulations.

All municipal officials place the highest priority on safe drinking water. No one wants to take foolish chances with their water system. However, there are many responsible local officials and water system operators that sincerely believe that the existing Wyoming backflow rules are overbearing, wasteful and not based on a sound assessment of risk.

The practical effect of the current rule is to require installation of a dual check valve and some kind of expansion relief on a residential service line whenever a water main is replaced or newly constructed. We sought information about similar policies from the states of Colorado, Idaho, Maryland, Montana, North Dakota and Utah. We found that *none of these states have such a requirement*. Notes from our research are attached.

Another important indicator of the seriousness of a health risk is the stance of the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA"). The agency has never been hesitant to mandate changes when they deemed a risk to justify the necessary expense. As you are well aware, EPA has not required backflow prevention on residential service lines or other low hazard water services in the way that the current Wyoming rules do. This is another clear demonstration that the current rules of the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality are out of step with the rest of the nation.

We appreciate that the proposed rule will eliminate a blanket mandate and allow local officials to make a choice about how to use the financial resources of their water systems, based on an actual risk assessment. A few may decide to require residential premises containment regardless of risk and we respect that choice. However, we also know that there are many who feel that they have a duty to evaluate where their funds can be best used, and they support this change.

We appreciate your consideration of this proposal. We also appreciate this opportunity to comment. We are somewhat chagrined that we did not grasp the full implications of the existing rule when it was first considered. Please let us know if you need further information.

Yours very truly,

George Parks, Executive Director

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