April XX, 2015

The American Water Works Association (AWWA) is the nation’s leading organization of water professionals and a strong advocate for reinvestment and rehabilitation of the country’s aging water infrastructure. We are also advocates for making certain that investments in water infrastructure are made the right and most cost-effective way for the long run.

The careful consideration of materials appropriate to each infrastructure project is a critical part of this. While we recognize that every kind of pipe has appropriate applications, not all kinds of pipe are equally appropriate for all applications. AWWA believes it is critical that utilities and their design engineers be able to specify the kind of pipe that they consider most appropriate for each particular project in their community. Keeping the selection of materials in the hands of design engineers and local utilities is necessary if we are to have water pipes and treatment facilities that reliably do the job they are intended to do for the length of time planned by the design professionals.

Unfortunately, there is an effort in this state (*cite the bill name and number if possible*) that is intended to take the selection of pipe material in particular out of the hands of utilities and their design engineers. We oppose these efforts for numerous reasons, including:

* The selection of materials must be the responsibility of local utilities and design professionals who understand the unique characteristics of the project, the community, and the function of the infrastructure in question.
* The bill implies that all water pipe materials are equal as long as they meet the minimum AWWA and/or ASTM standards, but pipe materials have significantly different characteristics and are not equally appropriate for all applications. For that reason, the use of AWWA standards in the definition of "acceptable piping material" may be flawed and misleading.
* This is a classic example of a government solution to a problem that does not exist.
* The legislation will likely lead to a significant increase in bid protests and litigation over pipe selection on public projects, thereby delaying projects and wasting limited public resources.

We are neutral about which materials utilities select for their projects. Our opposition to this legislation is based on the negative effect it would have on the ability of utilities and design professionals to choose the best materials to serve their customers.

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*The American Water Works Association (AWWA) is the world’s largest educational and scientific organization dedicated to a better world through better water. Approximately 50,000 association members work as community water providers, federal and state regulators, environmentalists, academics, scientists, consultants, engineers, and manufacturers. They reside in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. territories. Our 4,000 utility members serve 80 percent of the U.S. population.*