



BACKFLOW PREVENTION INSTITUTE

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Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony to you today on House Bill 5317 and 5318 and on the important topic of cross connection control and backflow prevention. As a Past President of the American Society of Sanitary Engineering and the current Chairman of the ASSE Cross-Connection Control Technical Committee the importance of backflow prevention and of educating the public and the industry about this life saving protection is a task I have been involved with for many years. I am also someone who has been involved in the plumbing and mechanical industry for the last thirty six years working on systems and projects ranging from single family housing to manufacturing facilities to power plants, and hotels. During that time something has become very clear to me. I have found the one thing that never changes within water systems these varied and different facilities. That is the laws of Physics.

Water reacts to outside influences in the same way no matter what the building or home address is. A large water main break or other interruption or event within a water distribution system can drain the water from a single family home as easily as it does a hospital or a manufacturing facility. These actions can create a backsiphonage or backpressure problem that will cause a backflow events both within a residence's water system and also may draw the water from the residence back into the public distribution system. Once the water enters a home or a commercial facility the quality of the water can become compromised and the water can be contaminated. The necessary steps must be taken to insure that the water once it enters a consumers piping system cannot return to the public water distribution system. This is true in both residential and commercial properties.

The State of Michigan understands this and the adopted plumbing code requires backflow prevention assemblies and devices be installed on various systems installed in commercial and residential properties across the state. The need for backflow prevention and cross-connection control is something the state has realized and embraced for many years. Mandating the installation of backflow prevention assemblies on residential lawn sprinkler systems is a requirement of the plumbing code.

The frequency at which these assemblies need to be tested and certified in the state of Michigan is now beginning debated. The ASSE Series 5000 Cross-Connection Control Professional Qualification Standard requires and the Backflow Manufacturers recommend that at a minimum these assemblies tested on an annual basis. All three model plumbing codes including the Uniform Plumbing Code, the International Plumbing Code, and the National Standard Plumbing Code require that backflow prevention assemblies be tested on installation, repair, and relocation and at a minimum on an annual basis. These assemblies are mechanical devices that require testing and maintenance. If the hazard presented to a water system



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requires the installation of backflow prevention assemblies to protect the public water supply then it also must require that they be tested and maintain in accordance the manufacturer's instructions and with industry standards.

I would ask that the committee consider these thoughts as they review this legislation. Please do not look to weaken the current requirements for testing of backflow prevention assemblies or to prevent individual water systems or municipalities or jurisdictions from mandating more stringent standards to protect this precious life giving resource.

Sean Cleary

Vice-President of Operations

IAPMO Backflow Prevention Institute