



ABAG PLAN Corp. Sewer Smart Summit

June 15th, 2005

Joseph P. Bort MetroCenter Auditorium
101 Eighth Street
Oakland, CA 94607-4756

Life is like a sewer, what you get out of it depends on what you put into it

- Tom Lehrer

SUMMARY

On June 14th, 2005, the Association of Bay Area Governments' Pooled Liability Assurance Network Corporation (ABAG PLAN) hosted its first Sewer Smart Summit.

The purpose of the Summit was to create a dialogue between representatives from the government, regulatory and business organizations that influence sewer backup and backflow issues -- and identify potential resolutions to the conflicts that currently limit prevention efforts.

Some 80 attendees, in all, participated in the ABAG PLAN Sewer Smart Summit. They represented government regulators, plumbing professionals, industry and many of the communities around the San Francisco Bay. This latter group was made up of both building inspection and public works department representatives. A list of communities and organizations that participated is attached as Appendix A.

The Sewer Smart Summit consisted of an afternoon of presentations and discussions focusing on the various aspects of the prevention of sewer backups and backflows. Group presentations included a primer on the ABAG Be Sewer Smart Campaign, an overview of the Central Contra Costa County Sanitary District's backup prevention program, and a look at the State Water Board's Sanitary Sewer Overflow Reduction Program. Smaller working, "breakout" sessions delved into the challenges and potential opportunities related to specific backup prevention players and disciplines.

Complete meeting notes from the Summit, including overviews of the breakout session results, are attached as Appendix B.

Based on the tremendous interest in this first Sewer Smart Summit, and the outpouring of ideas regarding the better prevention of sewer backups and backflows that resulted from it, ABAG PLAN believes there is great potential for further improving efforts to prevent these events in our member communities.

As a result, and based on the lessons learned from this Summit, ABAG PLAN has established the following "positions" relative to the prevention of sewer backups and backflows and pledges its support to a continuation, and in fact, redoubling of our collective efforts to prevent backups and backflows.

Additionally, ABAG PLAN will continue to host forums to further the work begun at the Sewer Smart Summit and requests those interested in participating to support the efforts outlined in the following positions and continue to share information and resources to achieve our goals.

The road to Easy Street goes through the Sewer

- John Madden

**Association of Bay Area Governments
Pooled Liability Assurance Network Corporation (ABAG PLAN)**

Positions on the Prevention of Sewer Backups and Backflows

- We support **regulatory standards for sanitary sewer system operations and maintenance** with the goal of preventing backups and overflows and we urge **regulators** to work with communities, industry and plumbing professionals to develop regulations that are applicable to and provide maximum benefit to the real-world challenges of backup and backflow prevention.
- We support **training and professional standards** for quickly responding to and effectively mitigating the effects of sanitary sewer backups and overflows when they do occur and urge **communities** to continue to improve their efforts to field the best prepared and trained first responders possible.
- We support the **real-world notion** that backups and overflows – in spite of our best collective efforts – can, and from time-to-time will, occur and that when they do, the very **worst place for them to happen is in a home or business**. Therefore, we urge communities to adopt local ordinances and engage in other efforts that help owners to protect their properties from these devastating events.
 - We support the ability of communities to **make use of any and all reasonable methods for protecting themselves from sewer backups and overflows** and urge them to **adopt local ordinances specifying the use of relief valve type devices**, where appropriate, as an additional “safety net” to their other backup and backflow prevention requirements.
- We support communities' use of relief **valve type backup prevention devices** and urge **IAPMO** to work with them and other interested parties to **modify the current provisions of the Uniform Plumbing Code** to recognize and endorse their use in applications where they will prove effective in preventing backups and backflows.
- We support **industry's efforts to create and field more and better backup and overflow prevention products** and urge designers, manufacturers and distributors to continue these efforts while **pursuing UPC and other industry listings and certifications** of existing and new products.
- We support **public education and outreach efforts** to further enlighten home and business owners about the risks and rewards related to sewer backup and backflow prevention and we encourage our communities to **continue -- and grow – their efforts** in this important area.

APPENDIX A: Communities and Organizations Represented

ALTOJET Enterprises, LLC
Builders Exchange of Alameda County
Castro Valley Sanitary District
Central Contra Costa Sanitary District
Central Contra Costa Sanitary District
City of Alameda
City of Alameda
City of Benicia
City of Brentwood
City of Burlingame
City of Foster City
City of Hayward
City of Livermore
City of Los Altos
City of Millbrae
City of Morgan Hill
City of Oakland
City of San Bruno
City of San Bruno
City of San Carlos
City of San Jose
City of San Jose

City of Sunnyvale
City of Sunnyvale,
Driver Alliant Insurance Services, Inc.
IAPMO
Mr. Rooter of the Tri-Valley
Mr. Rooter of Berkeley/Oakland
MRWPCA
Mt. View Sanitary District
RMA Engineering and Management
Ross Valley Sanitary District
Sewer Authority Mid-Coastside
SF Bay RWQCB
State Water Resources Control Board
County of Alameda
The Berkeley Building Education Center
Tomales Village Central Sanitary District
Vallejo Sanitation and Flood Control District
West County Wastewater District (WCWD)
West Valley Sanitation District

APPENDIX B: Sewer Smart Summit Meeting Notes

INTRODUCTION

Marcus Beverly, ABAG PLAN Director, introduced and welcomed Scott Haggerty, ABAG President and Alameda County Supervisor at 1:00 p.m.

WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

Scott Haggerty, ABAG President opened the meeting and welcomed the attendees who were comprised of public work directors, building inspectors, representatives from local communities, local business owners and other industry representatives. Haggerty said that ABAG was glad to be the sponsor of the Sewer Smart Summit which will mark the beginning of a new and more effective dialogue about the business of sewer backup and prevention.

A PRIMER ON BE SEWER SMART: LESSONS LEARNED, CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED

Beverly provided the members with a brief background of the program saying that the "Sewer Smart Campaign", is an active, comprehensive campaign that brings internal and public education efforts under one integrated umbrella. It harnesses internal best practices and applies them across the spectrum of members, system management and claims process management; raises awareness and enlists homeowner support through public education.

The Sewer Summit Objectives are:

- To bring together the parties who can most influence the prevention of sewer backflows;
- To discuss the biggest challenges and opportunities impacting the prevention of backflows, especially into homes and businesses;
- To agree to work together to coordinate regulations and practices and educate the public about prevention.

Beverly spoke about why the program was started, what the program has accomplished to date, system management, claims processing and public education. He mentioned that BPD kits are available to jurisdictions and homeowners.

The Three Goals are:

- Recognize backflows happen and the least appealing option is discharge into home or business;
- Recognize that cleanout relief devices exist, are effective, and should be approved for use;
- Agree to work together to educate internal and external customers on how backflows can be prevented.

THE STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD'S SANITARY SEWER MANAGEMENT PLAN (SSMP) AND HOW IT IMPACTS PREVENTION EFFORTS

Bryan Brock, Senior Engineer of the State Water Resources Control Board made a presentation about the State Water Board's efforts on the Sewer overflow reduction program. He spoke about how they are trying a collaborative approach towards achieving success statewide. They have formed an SSO Guidance Committee, which consists of collection system owners, county health, environmental advocates and state water quality agencies. Brock presented members with a list of their efforts over the last year, which included State-wide general WDR and reporting requirements.

Brock mentioned a reporting program that requires all sewer spills be entered into a database, which is the reporting mechanism that replaces any regional board requirements. Standards for operation and maintenance, including reasonable maintenance intervals, are being developed as a successor to the EPA's CMOM program.

For additional information, the State Water Board's website is www.swrcb.ca.gov/ssso.

THE CASE FOR BACKUP AND BACKFLOW PREVENTION

Curt Swanson, Environmental Services Division Manager of the Central Contra Costa Sanitary District, made a presentation on backup and backflow prevention. He spoke on the need for overflow devices, the CCCSD Overflow Device history, ordinance, compliance, educational outreach, overflow events and claims. Swanson said that between 1998 – 2005, public sewer overflows have numbered 941, an average per year of 107, with the average cost of a claim \$14, 622.

He said the overflow devices can reduce or eliminate property damage due to sewage overflows. The cost of overflow device is nominal compared to typical damage costs.

BRIEF-BACKS FROM BREAKOUT SESSIONS & PANEL DISCUSSION: OVERCOMING THE DISCONNECT – A COURSE OF ACTION FOR BETTER BACKUP/BACKFLOW PREVENTION

A. Identifying Maintenance Challenges and Potential Resolutions

Moderators:

- Larry Rugaard, Principal Engineer of RMA Engineering and Management
- Jaime Heredia, Supervising Civil Engineer, Infrastructure and Maintenance, Oakland Public Works Agency

Challenges:

1. Monitoring, Tracking, Reporting
2. Capital Forecasting
3. Scheduling capital works to minimize cost impacts
4. Shifting from Reactive” to Proactive maintenance
5. Sources of funds for “Dynamic Managed System”

Potential Resolutions:

CIP Rehab. PGM

- User Rates -- allow for creation of reserve for O&M
- Capacity vs. Maintenance
- CCTV Entire System – rate and rank priorities
- Preventive Maintenance – Implement
- Shift to planned maintenance model from to fixing “Hot Spots”.
- (SMP) – Sewer Maintenance Program – Implement track cost of Maintenance Operations

Sewer Management Program (SMP) – Feedback on success of Maintenance Operations:

- Allows to measure efficiency/success (share w/front line superv./staff) of Maintenance Operations
- SMP – management tool
 - Allows for setting realistic goals based on agency network (work plan yearly)
 - Allows for staff/equip. allocation (based on good data).
 - \$6/customer
 - Accountability for use of funds
 - 1% of asset value - preventive maintenance

Benefits

- Increased productivity – savings to city
 - Result of well managed system
- State grants available if sewer management system is in place
- Sharing of information
 - “As – Builts”
 - Asset properties (pipe type, size, condition, maintenance history)
 - Reduction of overflows

Additional Resolutions:

1. Define, Schedule Resource Needs
Fund Improved Proactive Plan (Prepare SSMP)
20-year Financial Plan
2. Source of funds for Dynamic Plan
 - a) User Changes
 - b) SRF
 - c) Reserves
3. Team Building – System Knowledge
 - o Management – Engr. Maint,
 - o Information sharing

B. Identifying Code Challenges and Potential Resolutions

Moderators:

- Mike Kobel, Director of Code Services, IAPMO
- Curt Swanson, Environmental Services Division Manager, Central Sanitary District

Challenges and Resolutions:

1. No standard in the code for cleanout devices - work with standards developing organizations to create product standard for overflow protection devices.
2. No specifications for backflow devices other than the backwater valve - develop and propose new code language for plumbing code to allow these cleanout devices.
3. Can allow under local ordinance in addition to plumbing code but most jurisdictions don't allow - amend local ordinance/code to allow installation of these devices, pending code approval.
4. Backwater valves prone to fail if not maintained - require proper maintenance of backwater valve in local code and educate public on their use.
5. Encourage manufacturers to certify devices and improve design.

C. Identifying Health Challenges and Potential Resolutions

Moderators:

- Bryan Brock, Senior Engineer, State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB)

Challenges and Resolutions:

1. Macro Spills
 2. Mini spills – into homes or businesses
 3. Public Education
 4. Worker Safety
- Macro - large spills, public right of way
 - County Health Officer issue
 - Lack of Standard
 - o No established indicators that link public health problems w/SSOs
 - o Once a SSO occurs no protocols to respond (sampling, closures of public places, public notification)
 - o Standard coordination protocols
 - o Lack of education & knowledge by County Health

- Stormwater Agency:
 - Emergency Response notification procedures
 - SSO's making its way into environment, how to notify/limit these impacts
 - Know the standards and requirements from local/regional env. Regulators
- Local Agency:
 - Emergency Response Plan
 - Not all agencies have a well documented plan
- Mini – Sewer Backups:
 - Homeowner doesn't know what to do when backup occurs
 - Cleanup
 - Rely on yellow pages
 - Plumbers are not always in the know

Solution:

- Public education, plumbing standards, plumbing certification in addition to contract license

Worker Safety:

- Public health risk due to exposure.
- Standards and education needed to prevent illness.

Where is the best place to discharge:

- inside the house
- outside the house on private property
- outside the house on public right of way

D. Homeowner/Builder and Plumbing Professional Challenges and Potential Resolutions

Moderators:

- Dave Ferguson, Owner, Mr. Rooter of the Tri-Valley
- Jeff Hatcher, Chief Plumbing Inspector, Oakland Building Services Agency

Challenges and Resolutions

- Cleanout should be capped per code. Not a problem when have a backup in lateral that only enters tub and can be cleaned. Is a problem if backflow occurs and floods home.
- Contra Costa Cleanout Device (Mushroom device) – is an option if sewer system not in good shape, to prevent backflows into home.
- Sewer lateral conditions and inspections – encourage practice like in Albany and Burlingame requiring inspection when sell home.

Be it resolved

- Cleanout relief devices not for every application (case-by-case)
- City inspector can "accept", sign off on devices not recognized by code.
- ABAG – encourage lateral inspection and maintenance, including ordinances requiring inspection upon sale of home. Also encourage tougher ordinances like in Belvedere (backwater required) and Hillsborough (install backwater at houses when required).

Panel Discussion:

In addition to the wrap-up discussions, Raul Godinez, Director of City of Oakland's Public Works Agency, provided a broad perspective on the challenges of the public works profession. He said

that the public works seems to be an invisible profession. The challenges they face are how to raise their profile and compare it to other functions of the city, for example, police, fire and library.

Godinez suggested one of the ways was to take SewerSmart and produce a thirty minute infomercial and run the infomercial on the cities public access channels. This way the subject of sewers would be before the public. He said that the City of Oakland's City Council looks at polls of what citizens are interested in during their two year budget cycles. Godinez said that public works in Oakland, unfortunately, doesn't poll as high as other functions of the city.

Godinez said that it was his personal goal to raise public works profile by political process, polling, budgeting, get more funding and attention. He suggested a thirty-minute infomercial for public access channels as a way of educating the public on this and other issues.

WRAP UP – NEXT STEPS IN BACKUP/BACKFLOW PREVENTION

Beverly said the objective of this first Sewer Smart Summit was to get different groups of people in the same room together to talk about issues, the disconnects, local regulations, codes, practices and procedures. Based on the feedback received, we have a number of areas of agreement regarding prevention of backflows and how such efforts could be improved. ABAG PLAN will provide a summary of the meeting and a position paper outlining the general areas of agreement for continued discussion and improvement.

ABAG PLAN will continue to support the Sewer Smart campaign and is particularly interested in raising public awareness of how to prevent backflows into homes and businesses. Other groups interested in specific areas of the program will be encouraged to take ownership of key activities needed to keep it going and expand. For example, health, regulatory and manufacturing organizations should work together to approve sewer relief devices for use under the code and encourage further improvements in their design.

He said he would like to see these efforts expand beyond plumbing supply stores to larger home improvement outlets, providing training as well as products to prevent backflows. Beverly also requested Sanitation Risk Management Authority (CSRMA) members to ask their Board members to support the Sewer Smart program.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m. and was followed by a Post-Summit Networking reception.

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Tragedy is when I cut my finger, Comedy is when you fall into an open Sewer and Die

- Mel Brooks