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December 8, 2011

The Robert W. Godshall
Chairman
House Consumer Affairs Committee
PO Box 202053
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2053

RE: House Bill 1855 – Water Well Construction Standards

Dear Chairman Godshall:

The National Association of Water Companies (NAWC) www.nawc.org/ represents all aspects of the private water service industry including ownership of regulated drinking water and wastewater utilities and the many forms of public-private partnerships and management contract arrangements. The Pennsylvania Chapter consists of 10 member companies that provide safe and adequate drinking water service to approximately 3.1 million Pennsylvanians in 485 communities over 39 counties. In addition, three of our member companies provide wastewater service to approximately 155,000 Pennsylvanians in 24 communities over 7 counties.

The Chapter strongly **supports** House Bill 1855 (Miller-R), which was referred to the House Consumer Affairs Committee on December 7, 2011. The Chapter respectfully requests the committee's consideration of this important legislation.

House Bill 1855 amends Title 27 (Environmental Resources), in conservation and natural resources, providing for water well construction standards. Specifically, the legislation provides the statutory authority authorizing the Environmental Quality Board (EQB) to establish water well construction standards through the adoption of rules and regulations of the DEP that are generally consistent with the National Groundwater Association construction standards.

Establishing water well construction standards is an important component of the Commonwealth's water resource protection program. Two independent statewide advisory committees have made strong recommendations to do so. In 2008, the Statewide Water Resources Committee reported its top legislative recommendation was to "...establish statewide private water well construction standards." In July of 2011, the Marcellus Shale Advisory Commission issued its recommendations which included the establishment of construction

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standards for new private water wells to ensure the delivery of safe drinking water to its residents.

Some 20,000 new water wells are drilled each year in Pennsylvania, but the Commonwealth is one of the few states without private well regulations. More than 3 million Pennsylvanians rely on about 1 million private wells for drinking water. Improperly constructed water wells can lead to poor water quality by providing pathways for bacteria and contaminants such as naturally occurring shallow methane gas to migrate into water supplies. Ensuring that the well is constructed properly from the start will help to prevent water quality problems in the future.

It is important to note that this legislation would merely establish construction standards, including the decommissioning of abandoned wells, to be followed by water well drillers and owners. Nothing in this legislation requires the metering of homeowner wells. In fact, Section 3118 (b)(f) of Act 220 of 2002, known as the Water Resources Planning Act, specifically prohibits DEP or EQB from requiring the metering of homeowner wells.

The Chapter thanks you for considering our comments on this most important legislation to our members and their customers. If you should need any additional information or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Very truly yours,



David Lewis
Chair

CC: Chairman Preston
Representative Miller