

HB 692: Backflow Preventers

I spoke with Rep. Ellington and Denny and Sen. Huggins and Ferris. They wholeheartedly support this bill.

The Senate held a hearing on this bill and heard testimony from small business and home owners who have be gouged by installers (installation prices ranging from \$300 to \$1,200).

Also, the Health Department does not have any statistics on deaths or illnesses resulting from water supplied under backflow conditions.

The Board of Health will likely adopt regulations tomorrow to classify irrigation systems and pools as “very low risk” meaning backflow preventers to will not be required for these item.

Ron Aldridge, NFIB, called to express the federation’s full support for the bill as a number of small businesses had been “snookered” into purchasing preventers as sums exceeding \$5,000.

Commentary:

The legislation attempts would create the perception of a public health risk by removing the requirement; however, the Department of Health does not have any statistics or records to the contrary.

HB 692 does require backflow preventers for irrigation systems that are connected to waste systems or use fertilizers. This makes the bill tolerable from a public health position.

EPA could come back and mandate the requirement of backflow preventers, but that could happen on any legislation.

Recommendation:

Sign the bill.