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LOCAL COMMUNITIES DECLARE OPEN SEASON ON SEWER BACKUPS
THOUSANDS OF BAY AREA HOMEOWNERS WILL PROTECT THEMSELVES WITH
FREE BACKUP & BACKFLOW PREVENTION DEVICES

ABAG PROCLAIMS NOVEMBER THROUGH APRIL
“BE SEWER SMART– PREVENT BACKUPS & BACKFLOWS SEASON”

Oakland, CA – The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) kicks off its “Be Sewer Smart – Prevent Sewer Backups and Backflows” public education campaign at a press conference today in Oakland. The “Be Sewer Smart” campaign targets homeowners who are unaware of the risk of backup damage during rainy season months between November and April, and alerts them to prepare their homes for rain impact. This award winning campaign, first launched in 2003, has helped reduce backup and backflow claims by 75 percent for ABAG PLAN (Pooled Liability Assurance Network Corporation) member cities, saving communities over \$2 million dollars per year for the last few years.

Dave Cortese, ABAG President and San Jose City Vice Mayor, says, “Each year we have sewer backups, especially during our rainy season, and hundreds of Bay Area homeowners experience the damage and trauma of often preventable sewer backups into their homes. The good news is that many of these backups are preventable if homeowners observe some simple, sewer maintenance tips and install an inexpensive backflow-prevention device. He adds, “As part of the campaign, we will be offering homeowners free backup/backflow prevention devices (BPDs).”

ABAG’s “Be Sewer Smart – Prevent Sewer Backups and Backflows” campaign not only includes distribution of free sewer BPDs which can be ordered on ABAG’s interactive

website, www.sewersmart.org , but also access to an array of backup prevention resources. Through the website, homeowners can receive a free BPD along with instructions for self-installation, as well as links to locally licensed and insured contractors participating in the program who have agreed to make installations at low rates if needed. The campaign website also guides homeowners in a step-by-step walk-through of their property and provides a simple risk assessment test to determine if their home is at risk of a sewer backup. Homeowners without Internet access can contact their local sewer district or city public works department for backup prevention assistance.

Julie Carter, ABAG PLAN Loss Prevention Committee Chair and Assistant to Dublin City Manager, affirms why the public education campaign and use of backflow prevention devices are important: “Backup and backflow events have cost local homeowners and their communities as much as \$4 million annually in the past. We congratulate our ABAG PLAN member cities and towns for their dedication and partnerships with their residents to have driven these costs down last year and hope to further reduce damage from backups and backflows during the 2007-8 rainy season.”

ABAG PLAN Corporation is a non-profit corporation formed by ABAG to benefit the citizens of each member community by establishing a stable, cost-effective self-insurance, risk sharing and risk management program for each member. ABAG PLAN was formed in 1985 and currently has 31 member cities and towns in the Bay Area. PLAN provides liability and property coverage, as well as a variety of risk management services such as training, claims management, loss prevention and consulting services. For more details, visit www.abag.ca.gov/plan.

Founded in 1961, ABAG is the official regional planning agency for the 101 cities and towns, and nine counties of the Bay Area and is recognized as the first council of governments in California.

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