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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 San Jose. The “Be Sewer Smart” campaign targets homeowners whose homes may unknowingly be at risk of backup damage during rainy season months between November and April. This award winning campaign, first launched in 2003, has helped reduce backup and backflow claims by 74 percent for ABAG PLAN (**P**ooled **L**iability **A**ssurance **N**etwork Corporation) member cities, saving communities over \$2 million dollars per year for the last two years.

In launching this year’s region-wide campaign, Dave Cortese, ABAG President and San Jose City Councilmember, said, “Each year, especially during our rainy season months, hundreds of Bay Area homeowners experience the trauma of unnecessary and often preventable sewer backups into their homes. ABAG and ABAG PLAN are committed to doing all it can to help Bay Area homeowners protect themselves from these damaging events.” “The good news is that these backups are often preventable if homeowners observe simple sewer maintenance tips and, in many cases, if they install an inexpensive backflow prevention device,” he added.

ABAG’s “Be Sewer Smart – Prevent Sewer Backups and Backflows” campaign includes distribution of free sewer backflow prevention devices and an interactive website, www.sewersmart.org with backup prevention resources. The campaign website 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. Thousands of free backup/backflow prevention devices (BPDs) are also available to homeowners (while supplies last). 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. Homeowners without Internet access can contact their local sewer district or city public works department for backup prevention assistance.

Larry Anderson, ABAG PLAN Loss Prevention Committee Chair and Burlingame City Attorney, 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. When you consider all the things our communities could be doing with the money they spend on undoing backup damage, there are plenty of good, common sense reasons to install a backflow prevention device.”

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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