

Text of letter to Governor Casey from the Back Mountain Water Commission

Members of the Back Mountain Water Commission representing eight local municipalities expressed their concerns with the recent decision of the Bureau of Safety and Compliance of the Public Utilities Commission to allow the Dallas Water Company to add new service without fulfilling the requirements of an earlier agreement with Back Mountain residents.

In a letter to Gov. Robert Casey, commission Chairman James Ward, on behalf of the members, stated they felt the Dallas Water Company had not been cooperative and that the PUC was remiss in handling the matter of the water company's agreement.

A copy of the Commission's letter to Governor Casey follows:

Re: Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Public Utility Commission
Report
6/1/89 for Dallas Water Company
Case C 881905 et al from
Kenneth E. Nicely, Director
Bureau of Safety and Compliance

Governor Robert Casey
Governor's Office
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Dear Governor Casey:

Members of the Back Mountain Regional Water Commission, representing eight municipalities, including the area in question, were invited to a private meeting with the executives of the Dallas Water Company and representatives of the Public Utility Commission, by the six customers of the Dallas Water Company who filed the complaint.

We had received the reports from the Consumer Advocates Office and had prepared questions about the reports and conditions that exist within the Dallas Water Company. We hoped to determine the actual capacity of the system and if any planned future development was anticipated by the company.

At the meeting, when we attempted to ask questions that were relative to the report, we were told that the information in the report was factual and that they took the majority of information from reports to the Public Utility Commission, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources, Consulting Com-

pany's Schooley Well pumping test, and two reports from engineering consultants requesting hookups for their clients and the water demand required.

The 1989 PUC Report is very similar to the 1981 PUC Report that stated the Dallas Water Company water supply was adequate but noted a need for a booster pump in the area in question. (It took eight years to correct a problem?)

When we asked pertinent questions about water supply, the Public Utility Commission representatives stated that booster pumps could be installed and that there was no problem. In regard to the supposed 180,000 gpd available from the Shavertown Water Company, (a sister company that has two contaminated wells at present, and has a history of dirty water and poor pressure), no information is available in regard to its capacity or excess water that might be available without jeopardy to service for Shavertown customers.

The Back Mountain Regional Water Commission invited Michael Coyle, present manager of the Dallas/Shavertown Water Company, to their meeting on March 2, 1989. At that time he stated that he would send us information covering both water companies. (The Commission has been compiling data on water wells, such as age, depth, volume, average usage, etc.). He stated that he would send this information promptly. Since then, we have sent written requests twice and have had no reply. We asked for that same information at this meeting, and the president of the Dallas Water Company stated that he would see to it that the Commission would receive the data requested. The Back Mountain Regional Water Commission is trying to determine the availability of groundwater in the area using questionnaires sent out in local phone bills and printed in the local newspapers. This information will be put into a data bank which will help us determine the quantity of water available, etc. We have received 1264 responses to date, (almost 8%), but, to date, nothing from the Dallas/Shavertown Water Company. This response indicates widespread community concern with our water supply.

The Back Mountain Regional Water Commission is made up of

concerned citizens, who are hydrologists, geologists, chemists, public relations specialists, engineers, lawyers, water technicians, retirees, insurance men, well-drillers, housewives and computer scientists. The Commission is aware that Luzerne County had a water supply report compiled by a consulting engineering firm, Gilbert Associates, in 1973. This report stated that in 1990 the Back Mountain would be running out of groundwater as demand would be greater than supply. This is the Commission's concern!

One of the Dallas Water Company's wells, (the Natona) was contaminated in May, 1988. It is very near the new Schooley Well, (200 gpm).

There are other private wells in the area, serving Native Textiles, College Misericordia and the Meadows Nursing Home complex, all drawing from the same aquifer. What happens during dry seasons? Will the cone of depression pull contaminants further into the aquifer?

The Dallas Water Company has not come up with an adequate water audit. A public meeting has not been held as required under the referenced agreement. The Public Utility Commission, Bureau of Safety and Compliance, has broken the agreement by indiscriminately allowing new hookups without consultation or the required information as required in the agreement. The PUC 1989 Report rehashes old information, only adding information from the new Schooley Well and the interconnection from the Shavertown Water Company. The only source information in the report was pressure readings on the system in the Stonehedge area.

We call this to your attention, since we as citizens and taxpayers, as well as representatives of the Back Mountain Regional Water Commission feel that the Public Utility Commission is remiss in their handling of this matter.

Very Truly Yours
James Ward, Chairman
Back Mountain Regional Water Com.

cc. Jerry Rich, Sec. PUC
Sen. Charles Lemmond
Rep. Scott Dieterick
Atty. Gen. Ernest Preate

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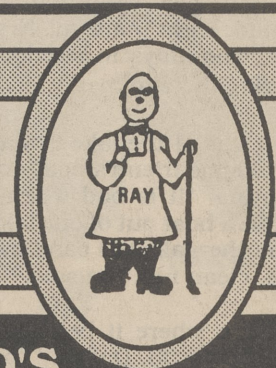
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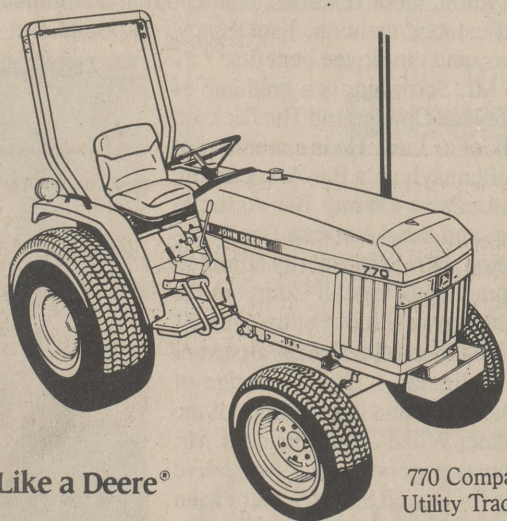
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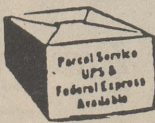
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