



April 8, 2026

Chairwoman V. Susan Sosnowski
Senate Committee on Environment and Agriculture
State House
Providence, RI 02903

Re: S 2803 – An Act Relating to Waters and Navigation – Public Drinking Water Supply

The Hon. Brett P. Smiley
Mayor
Ricky Caruolo
General Manager

Dear Chairwoman Sosnowski:

The Providence Water Supply Board would like to take this opportunity to comment on S 2803 which would change the backflow prevention device/system testing requirement from annually to every ten years, except in cases of an emergency or public health crisis.

Providence Water owns and operates the largest water utility in Rhode Island. We are responsible for supplying affordable, high-quality drinking water to more than 600,000 retail and wholesale customers throughout the state. If cross-connections exist within a plumbing system when backflow occurs, it is possible to contaminate or pollute the drinking water supply.

Annual testing is an industry standard recommended by manufacturers and required by plumbing codes. Without routine annual testing, backflow assembly failures could go undetected for years, creating significant risk to public health and water supply systems.

The current annual backflow prevention device/system testing requirement was established through collaboration between the Rhode Island Department of Health, the Rhode Island Backflow Association, water suppliers and plumbers. As such, Providence Water opposes the passage of S 2803 and believes that requiring annual backflow testing is in the best interest of public health and water quality protection.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this legislation.

Respectfully,
PROVIDENCE WATER SUPPLY BOARD

Ricky Caruolo
General Manager

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(401) 521-6300

125 Dupont Drive
Providence, RI 02907

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