



SOUTH ATLANTIC WELL DRILLERS Position Statement - Adopted 1999

Position 1: Protection of Ground Water. The South Atlantic Well Drillers support the following actions in the interest of ground water protection:

- Determination by federal, state and local government that there will be zero tolerance of all forms of ground water pollution;
- Strict enforcement of all laws and regulations governing ground water and surface water protection;
- Strict enforcement of all laws and regulations which require the clean up of all potential and existing sources of ground water pollution;
- Comprehensive review of all programs, laws and regulations that have an impact on ground water and surface water resources; and, based on such review,
- Comprehensive nationwide planning for the conservation and protection of all water resources, both ground water and surface water;
- A moratorium on the construction of any new public water systems which are not accompanied simultaneously by the construction of a public waste water management system;
- Comprehensive review of, and long term planning for, waste water management and treatment; and,
- Comprehensive review and study of the advantages and disadvantages of centralized water systems, their impact on the environment and the quality of water they produce.

Rationale: Eighty to ninety percent of America's available fresh water resources are found beneath the earth. Because the hydro-geological cycle provides an amazing system for purifying ground water resources, in many places, ground water remains the safest source of potable water available. However, the natural filtration process that creates potable ground water is increasingly under assault from toxic waste products and pollutants. While many measures are being taken to protect ground water, the problem continues to grow. Some of the most obvious reasons that current approaches are failing include:

- Conflict of interest between the enforcement of environmental policies (laws and regulations) and the protection of economic interests;
- Inadequate enforcement of existing laws and regulations;
- Inadequate funding for enforcement programs;
- Failure of officials and agencies to deal with major polluters of surface water, namely urban areas;
- Failure of land use planning to consider water resources protection; and,
- Failure to recognize that the chemical treatments necessary for producing potable water from surface water contribute to ground water pollution.

Officials have begun to embrace the use of public water systems as a way to avoid the problem of cleaning up contamination. No solution could be more short-sighted, for ultimately, ground water is by far our most vast and reliable water resource.

There are a number of problems with using public water systems to avoid cleaning up contaminated ground water. The most obvious problem, from the standpoint of ground water protection, is that public water systems themselves often carry large amounts of chemicals and/or toxic gases (trihalomethanes) which can end up in