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December 17, 2010

Honorable Stephen M. Sweeney
President, New Jersey Senate
935 Kings Highway, Suite 400
West Deptford, NJ 08086

ATTN: Andrew Hendry

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing on behalf of our client, the Irrigation Association, to request that a vote be scheduled for S-478, currently on 2nd reading in the Senate. This legislation, sponsored by Senators Lesniak and Cardinale, would allow irrigation contractors to connect landscape irrigation systems to potable water systems if they can demonstrate that they have been properly trained to do so.

Currently, only licensed plumbers can make these connections. That means that a licensed irrigation contractor, who has already completed a landscape irrigation system and connected it to a backflow preventer, must then hire a plumber to make the final connection to the water supply. This requirement increases the cost to consumers by as much as 16%, so allowing properly trained irrigation contractors to make these connections would make this environmentally and economically friendly technology more attainable to the average consumer. It would also make the products the small business members of the IANJ sell more attractive to consumers at a time when they and their employees are struggling in an uncertain economy.

Twenty years ago, when the Irrigation Contractors Licensure Act first passed, the legislature limited the potable water connection to licensed plumbers out of concern over the difficulty and complexity of the work. Since then, however, both new technology and new training, like that offered by the New England Water Works Association, have ensured that this cost saving measure can be enacted while protecting the public health. Senators Lesniak and Cardinale have acknowledged these developments through their sponsorship of S-478, and we ask that the full Senate be given the opportunity to echo their support.

Once again, we respectfully request the Senate's consideration of S-478. Thank you and we look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Clark Martin

Paul Bontempo

Rudy Garcia

Tim Martin

Cc: Honorable Raymond Lesniak
Honorable Gerald Cardinale