RESOLUTION NO. 81

STATEMENT OF POLICY ON SEWER AND DRAINAGE WELLS

BE IT RESOLVED, that this Regional Water Pollution Control Board disapproves the construction and use of wells for the purpose of disposing of effluent from septic tanks or surface runoff from streets or highways except where such wells discharge into a formation which at no time will contain ground water fit for domestic, agricultural, or industrial use.

JOHN S. LONGWELL
Chairman

December 20, 1951

I, John B. Harrison, hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of Resolution No. 81 and adopted by the Regional Water Pollution Control Board of Region No. 2, at its regular meeting on December 20, 1951.

JOHN B. HARRISON
Executive Officer
Regional Water Pollution Control
Board No. 2

EXPLANATION OF BOARD POLICY
AND
RESOLUTION NO. 81, STATING THE BOARD'S POLICY ON SEWER AND DRAINAGE WELLS

The use of wells for the purpose of disposing of effluent from septic tanks or for disposing of surface runoff from streets or highways, has for some time been a matter of study and investigation by this Board. As the result of such studies and investigations the Board has, with certain exceptions, become greatly concerned over the continuation of such practices. Some of the reasons for this concern are as follows:

a. The underground waters have been and will continue to be a most important source of supply for domestic, agricultural and industrial use. The economy of the Region is to a large extent built around the use of these underground waters. It is, therefore, essential that the basins and the water therein be protected against any conditions that might impair their use as a source of water supply.

b. Wells used for disposal of septic tank effluent or the disposal of surface runoff from streets or highways by-pass the normal processes of nature which occur at or near the surface of the soil. Plants take up water and dissolved substances through their root systems. Transpiration, evaporation, and capillary action are also at work. A conventional septic tank with a properly designed and constructed leaching field laid out horizontally near the surface of the ground permits the application of septic tank effluent over a relatively large area without imposing any appreciable pressure and, except for periods when the soil is saturated, the waste is retained in the surface soil in which surface phenomena are able to exert their beneficial influence. On the other hand, wells of the type under consideration discharge within a relatively small area and under a pressure head or potential pressure head which injects waste into sub-surface strata rapidly and unchanged in chemical quality.

c. It is not practicable to control the quality of septic tank effluent or street drainage nor to eliminate dissolved chemical substances or liquids which, if permitted to enter the ground water, would deny use of such water for domestic purposes because of taste, odor, or unpalatability. For similar reasons ground water pollution has occured due to the introduction of chemical substances which rendered it unfit for irrigational and higher industrial uses.

d. The only practical method of controlling underground water pollution is by preventing it in the first place. Unlike surface pollution which is susceptible of detection and correction in its early stages, underground water pollution is not usually noticed until the damage is done and rapid abatement of such underground water pollution is impractical.

e. Underground water pollution affects not only the water itself but the underground storage basin as well. The impracticability of flushing out such a storage basin or separating one portion of it from another by construction of dams or otherwise cleaning it up is readily apparent. The damage, once done, may be long lasting or permanent.

f. Pollution of underground waters and the storage basin itself may continue for years without being detected. Relatively small quantities of some pollutants may be introduced to underground waters by such wells over a long period of time and eventually cause cumulative damage of large proportions.

g. Wells discharging effluent from septic tanks or surface runoff from streets and highways may cause pollution of underground basins regardless of whether the ground water is at present well below the bottom of such wells. The ground water may rise during cycles of higher precipitation or due to the discharging of water of satisfactory quality into the underground basin through properly controlled percolation beds or recharge wells. The underground basins should, therefore, be maintained in good condition at all times to permit their probable future use for water storage. The use of such controlled recharging practices will undoubtedly increase in the future as the demand for more underground water storage increases.

With the purpose in mind of protecting and preserving the quality of the underground waters in this Region from pollution, the Board has adopted the following resolution:

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RESOLUTION NO. 81

STATEMENT OF POLICY ON SEWER AND DRAINAGE WELLS

BE IT RESOLVED, that this Regional Water Pollution Control Board disapproves the construction and use of wells for the purpose of disposing of effluent from septic tanks or surface runoff from streets or highways except where such wells discharge into a formation which at no time will contain ground water fit for domestic, agricultural, or industrial use.

JOHN S. LONGWELL
Chairman

December 20, 1951

I, John B. Harrison, hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of Resolution No. 81 and adopted by the Regional Water Pollution Control Board of Region No. 2, at its regular meeting on December 20, 1951.

JOHN B. HARRISON
Executive Officer
Regional Water Pollution Control
Board No. 2

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