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December 29, 2011

Lisa Kahn, Team Leader
Drinking Water Enforcement Program
Office of Enforcement, Compliance
And Environmental Justice

United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region 8
1595 Wynkoop Street
Denver, Co 80202-1129

Re: Administrative Order
Kennington Springs Pipeline Public Water System
Docket No. SDWA-08-2011-0030
PWS ID 3WY5601199

Dear Lisa,

This is in response to your letter of November 17, 2011 to Tomi White, President of Kennington Springs Pipeline Company. As your records indicate, I have been the operator of Kennington Springs Pipeline Company since September of 2011, and since that time we have had no violations related to coliform.

Since becoming involved in this affair, research indicates that the violations in question occurred during two periods. October and November of 2010 and July and August of 2011.

During the months of October and November of 2010, we, (the Star Valley Area), had a substantial amount of rainfall, this **could** have caused some contaminant to enter the system. However, at the same time another untrained individual was responsible for the sample collection. I cannot at this time attest to what was actually the cause of the high levels of coliform. All we know is that the coliform levels were high. I'm not sure of which event caused the problem, as subsequent samples were acceptable until July of 2011.

Secondly, during the winter of 2010 we, (the Star Valley Area), had a record amount of snowfall. During the spring runoff a substantial amount of water was infused into the spring area. This again **could** have caused contaminant to enter the system, but again during this time the operator was replaced by an individual not trained in the proper collection technique. Subsequent samples were acceptable.

I think since subsequent samples proved to be acceptable, these violations were a direct result of improper sampling techniques. I personally was responsible for the samples taken in September of 2011 and they were acceptable, as have all samples since. At that time, I instructed the individual in the proper technique for collecting samples, should they be required to collect them in the future.

Again, because of my late involvement in this matter, I cannot effect any major changes in this system due primarily to the time of year. If the samples prove positive in the spring, during run-off, then a plan will be submitted to re-route any surplus water from the spring area. Now that this system is my professional responsibility I will do everything and anything necessary, as soon as possible, to get it in complete compliance with any and all EPA and DEQ rules and regulations.

I am requesting your office to allow me an extension of time to properly assess this system. I cannot make recommendations at this time, not knowing the exact cause of the violations. I need until the spring run-off to assess what may need to be implemented. As with all small systems, cash is all important, and any unnecessary expense has to be avoided. If the problem is improper sampling then it is resolved. If the problem persists this spring, we will make any necessary adjustments to the system... I have only in the last few days received the Sanitary Survey for this system and all suggestions for improvement will be effected as soon as the weather permits. A written operation and maintenance manual is currently being developed.

I, at this time, would like to apologize for Kennington Springs Pipeline, Board of Directors. Kennington Springs Pipeline is a very small system and the Board of Directors has changed several times in recent years, allowing for improper delegation of responsibilities and or authority. My experience with several small water districts has shown that these boards need to be educated as to the seriousness of their responsibilities.

The Board has asked me to get control of this situation and bring them and the system up to compliance with EPA and DEQ standards. Dan Chamberlain with Wyoming Rural Water is the designated back-up operator for this system and he is offering his expertise in resolving this issue.

The most important responsibility of all water operators should be the delivery of safe water to the public. This responsibility dictates that all prudent measures be implemented to assure everyone involved that this responsibility is being accomplished. It is with this thought that I ask for your patience and understanding in this matter. As the coliform levels are in compliance currently, allow me the time to correctly evaluate this system. I will effect any changes necessary.

Thank you,

Ernie Eaton
Water Operator
Kennington Springs Pipeline Co.

Cc: WY DEQ/DOH
Tina Artemis, EPS Regional Hearing Clerk
Tomi White, President Kennington Springs Pipeline Co.
Dan Chamberlain, Assistant Operator, Kennington Springs Pipeline Co.
Lincoln County Commissioners, Lincoln County, Wyoming