City of Harrisonburg, Virginia

Office of the City Manager

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Kurt D. Hodgen
City Manager

March 23, 2012

The Honorable Pat Herrity
Chairman
Governor's Task Force for Local Government Mandate Review
Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development
600 East Main Street, Suite 300
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Chairman Herrity:

I want to take this opportunity to inform you of another reporting requirement that originated with Federal regulators and was codified by the Commonwealth and passed on to the localities. Under 32.1-170 of the Code of Virginia, the localities are required to produce a "Consumer Confidence Report" on the quality of drinking water. This originated in the 1996 amendments to the Safe Drinking Water Act.

These regulations mandate that municipalities create, publish and mail a Consumer Confidence Report to every consumer. For the City of Harrisonburg, which has approximately 50,000 residents, this means the Public Utilities Department must expend approximately $10,000 annually to distribute these reports.

In this day of digital media, environmental efforts to reduce waste and "paperless" initiatives, it does not seem efficient to require localities to spend money on a paper report when there are much more efficient ways to distribute the information. To this end, the City recognizes the Commonwealth's recent regulatory change to allow communities with populations under 10,000 to publish their report in a newspaper. It is our recommendation that in addition to publishing in the local or regional newspaper, the municipality can post the report on their affiliated websites, as well as make it available on request at City offices. All of these efforts will ensure that the consumers have access to reports on the quality of their drinking water without providing a cost burden for the community.

The City of Harrisonburg and the Public Utilities Department enjoys the opportunity to share the extremely high quality of our local drinking water and the efforts of City staff to maintain this invaluable resource. We are asking the Task Force and our local elected delegation to consider finding a less costly alternative and more efficient manner for Virginia communities to report on their water quality. I understand and greatly appreciate the important work before the Governor's Task Force.

I commend you and the task force for your efforts to date and thank you in advance for your consideration of this request. If I can be of further assistance or answer any questions please do not hesitate to call upon me.

Sincerely,

Kurt Hodgen,
City Manager

CC: Senator Mark Obenshain
Delegate Tony Wilt