

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Contact:

Utilities Division

City of Bowie Public Works Department

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**City of Bowie Issues Statement on Insurance for Homeowners' Water and Sewer Lines**

From time to time, various companies will contact City residents to offer insurance for the water and sewer lines located on private property. The City of Bowie is not associated with any of these companies and does not endorse or recommend any particular insurance they may provide. The following information explains city and homeowner responsibilities for repairs which may be useful to residents considering the purchase of this type of insurance coverage.

The City of Bowie provides water and sewer service to approximately 7,900 properties, mostly in neighborhoods built by William Levitt & Sons. All other properties are served by the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission. For homes served by the City of Bowie, the City is responsible for repairs to water and sewer mains. Laterals carry water to, and sewage from dwellings. While the City of Bowie is responsible for the mains, homeowners are responsible for the portion of the laterals that run across their property to and from the mains.

On rare occasions, laterals can fail. The likelihood of failure is dependent on many factors including piping materials, quality of the installation, susceptibility to tree root damage, or different rates of settlement. Costs for repairs can vary depending on the length of the lateral, how much excavation is required, and obstructions in gaining access to the pipe. When tree roots grow into the lines, sewer backups may occur. Most general homeowner insurance policies do not cover damage caused by sewer backups. For this reason, homeowners may want to consider the purchase of a sewer backup endorsement to their homeowner's or renter's insurance policy, which usually costs about \$50 per year.

Questions about the City of Bowie Water and Sewer Service can be directed to the Utilities Division of Public Works. The telephone number is 240-544-5686. WSSC customers should contact the utility at 301-206-4001.

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*A similar press release was issued in March of this year.*