

Q&A regarding the NHC requirement that new developments offset anticipated demands on the county's water system by installing well(s).

Question

You indicated that the requirement has been in effect since February 2007. Was it advertised, and if not, how is word getting to developers and their engineers about the requirement?

Answer

The County Water and Sewer code, since adoption, has always required improvements to the system as necessary, as determined by the County Engineer. Recently, since February, it was determined that water capacity was not available to new development and the developers and engineers were notified as part of the TRC process or RFI process.

Question

Does the requirement apply to residential and commercial development?

Answer

Yes.

Question

Without an ordinance provision what is the authority for requiring the installation of independent offset wells in new developments?

Answer

The requirement is in the current ordinance.

Question

If these are temporary measures as you indicated that they might be who oversees the decommissioning of these wells? What conditions would have to be in place to take the well out of service?

Answer

The county staff could decommission the well, or it could be turned back over to the developer as is. The new Water Treatment Plant would have to be operational and the system would have to be capable of delivering adequate water supply to the areas where the wells are located.

On a separate note, at the time of development, it would be a great opportunity for the developer to install a parallel water line that could be used later as a separate irrigation system when the County system is no longer in need of the developer installed well and it is returned to the developer. The developer could physically disconnect the well from the potable system and operate it as an irrigation system.

Question

Would the county prohibit the construction of the development if it was determined that it was to be located in an area without an adequate ground water source, even if it was in an area that would permit it to connect to the county water system?

Answer

If the development required connection to the County water system to be a viable development, they would have to offset the demand with a supply source. If the development is unable to provide a supply, it would not be allowed to connect. County Engineering does not mandate connection to the County water system. Often the decision to connect to the water system is the result of Subdivision or Fire Services regulations.

Question

As we discussed, the water from the well(s) would not be connected to the county lines and go through the new water treatment plant once it goes on line, correct? And since there is a county ordinance that requires developments that can connect to the county system to do so, what will the wells which will are not connected to the treatment process be used for? In an area where the developer has installed an independent offset well(s), and county water becomes or is available can the residents refuse to connect to the county system and use only the water the well provides?

Answer

Correct. The remote wells are not physically practical to provide a raw water source for the proposed Water Treatment Plant. The wells installed for new developments will be abandoned, just as wells installed for old developments. There will only be one county water system, so I am not sure if I understand your last question. The well be permitted in the County's name and included in the County's water system. The system will be physically connected to the existing County system. So it will be one system, not separate systems. There will not be new line work established for the developments at the time the wells are taken off-line. The source water will just come from a different location. They would not have an opportunity to refuse connection to the County water system, because they will already be connected to the County's system. Again, however, the County Water and Sewer Code does not mandate connection to the County's water system at any time.