

K You Should **Know**



A Message from the American Concrete Pipe Association

Bulletin No. 126

Engineers Beware!!

Protect Your Right to Choose

The Missouri State Legislature recently helped preserve free enterprise by removing a last-minute amendment to a pending bill that would require HDPE storm sewer pipe as an alternative on all state stormwater projects. The provision was mysteriously added to a proposed piece of legislation (HB 327) just days before the Missouri legislature intended to vote on the bill. The provision would require polyethylene pipe as one of two piping materials on all state and local stormwater projects. The requirement was not included in the original version of HB 327, but somehow surfaced in the final version of the bill.

The Association of General Contractors of Missouri (AGC) reacted quickly upon discovering the addition to HB 327. After many of AGC's members expressed opposition to a bill that would limit one's ability to bid work competitively, the legislature quickly removed the provision; thus assuring that pipe selection remain in the hands of design professionals.

Although no HDPE pipe manufacturer has claimed responsibility for this attack on free enterprise, it seems unlikely that a state legislator created the provision alone. Therefore, one must ask the obvious question: Why would an alternate pipe material manufacturer attempt to circumvent appropriate channels of material selection?

The answer could be that the manufacturer was frustrated by their attempts at convincing design professionals in Missouri of their products ability to match the value of concrete pipe. Some of the advantages of using precast concrete pipe include the following:

- Service Life – While HDPE pipe manufacturers claim a service life of over 50 years - experience has shown otherwise. The Corps of Engineers assigns a service life of concrete pipe up to 100 years.
- Responsibility – Contractors know from experience that they can rely on local manufacturers of precast concrete pipe, not manufacturers from another state who seek to bypass local engineers and owners.
- Design Choices – With five different pipe classes and special designs and four installation types, storm sewer designers can use precast concrete pipe for nearly any circumstance. HDPE pipe offers one choice of pipe and installation that does not meet the needs of all projects, such as deep fills or live loads with shallow cover.
- Flammability – A realization of the importance of homeland security emphasizes the use of a product, like precast concrete pipe, that is both durable and non-flammable.

The ACPA continues to work with state DOT's to serve their stormwater conveyance needs and encourages specifiers to beware of alternate products that strive to eliminate design professionals from the selection of pipe materials in stormwater systems.

For more information on this project or other "You Should Know" bulletins that disclose the misinformation and dubious practices of alternative drainage products manufacturers, browse the ACPA web site at www.concrete-pipe.org.