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Associations, dealers rally to fight adverse POU regulation that no one saw coming. Is your state safe?

Summary: POU dealers in Texas are seeing statewide enforcement of a regulation that bans the discharge of water softener waste into septic systems. Dealers did not know the regulation was being passed until it was too late. That raises issues about legislative monitoring on a statewide level and has put national and local associations in the difficult position of trying to stop a regulation that could cost the POU industry millions of dollars in one of the country's most lucrative softener markets

By **Kevin Hart** | Executive Editor and **Stephanie Russo** | Associate Editor

A new regulation being enforced in Texas bans the discharge of water softener and reverse osmosis backflush into on-site sewage facilities (OSSF), commonly known as septic systems. The law hit dealers hard, as it could shut off a large portion of the water softening market in a region with some of the country's hardest water.

The regulation survived drafting and public comment periods without being noticed by Texas dealers or the Texas Water Quality Association (TWQA), the dealers' lobbying group.

The Water Quality Association (WQA) has been forced to throw its hat into the ring, as it tries to provide the necessary science and lobbying clout to get the law rescinded.

Over the next several months, the WQA and TWQA will be forced to show,

once again, that popular science disputes claims that softeners harm septic systems; ask a Texas agency to rescind a

regulation it just adopted; answer tough questions from dealers about how it passed without anyone knowing; and make sure dealers in other states aren't at risk of being caught off guard.

A regulation with teeth

The rule states that "Owners shall not allow water softener and reverse osmosis back flush to enter into any portion of the OSSF." Adopted in 2001 with enforcement beginning only in January, it has already had a tremendous impact on Texas POU dealers.

Hard water and softener bans

