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Dear Valued Customer:

The Water Works Board of the City of Birmingham (“Water Board”) will be in your area very soon replacing existing water mains with new water mains to improve reliability, flow and water pressure. As part of our project, we will replace and reconnect your service lines from the new water main to your water meter setting. With this replacement, the Water Board is required to add a new device called a “Dual-Check Backflow Preventer”.

The installation of the backflow preventer is required by for the Water Board to comply with provisions of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) Safe Drinking Water Act. It is also required by the State of Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM). The device will restrict any water that attempts to flow backwards from your home into the Water Board’s water main.

As a result of the installation of the Backflow Preventer, there will no longer be a way for pressure that builds up in your plumbing system to be absorbed by the Water Board’s water main. This expansion, called thermal expansion, is caused by the expansion of heated water inside your hot water heater. **Unless you provide a means for this pressure to be relieved, severe and extensive damage can occur inside your hot water heater, which could result in your hot water tank bursting and flooding in your home.**

Thermal expansion can be easily managed several ways, such as with a thermal expansion tank or several other devices available at any hardware store or home improvement store such, as Lowes or Home Depot. But, any home that does not already have a **“Thermal Expansion Device”** will need to make arrangements to have one installed.

The new mains will also improve your water pressure and water flow inside your home. The International Plumbing Code requires that any residential or commercial property with water pressure in excess of 80 pounds per square inch (psi) must have an approved **“Pressure Reducing Valve (PRV)”** with a strainer to reduce the new pressure to below 80 psi.

You are encouraged to contact a certified plumber to inspect your plumbing system to determine (1) if you have a **“closed plumbing system”** that requires the addition of a “Thermal Expansion Device” to eliminate excess pressure caused by thermal expansion, and (2) if you need a “Pressure Reducing Valve” installed in your plumbing system to reduce incoming water pressure to below 80 psi.

Please accept our Thanks for your cooperation and patience in handling this problem. Please feel free to contact Mr. Douglass Stockham in our System Development Department at (205) 244-4186 if you have any questions concerning this matter.