

## STORM WATER EDUCATION: PROPOSALS TO STREAMLINE COMMUNICATIONS EFFORTS IN CALIFORNIA

Below are ideas and suggestions raised at a storm water public education workshop held at the MWD headquarters in Los Angeles May 17, 2006, and revisited at an August 23 workshop held at that location. These proposals explore ways that the State Water Resources Control Board can work with NPDES storm water programs on streamlining education-outreach efforts to improve water quality objectives, share resources and save staff time and money.

We believe that the draft list has provided us with a good start, but want to ensure that we hear from all interested parties statewide. We have called for one additional workshop September 21 to accept additional feedback. Participants of the September 21 workshop and other interested parties associated with this subject are asked to review these proposals and comments to date, and help select the most viable, strategic and cost-effective options to implement in the foreseeable future. (A review of the accompanying August 23 workshop summary will prove helpful as you formulate your own thoughts on this action list.) A final draft action plan will then be provided to State Board members for consideration.

### **Proposals for Increased State Involvement:**

1. **Statewide Coordination of Advertising:** The State Water Resources Control Board can take the lead on a statewide advertising/media campaign that can be shared and promoted at a local level as well (similar to Erase the Waste or Caltrans' "Don't Trash California"). During the session, many participants mentioned that ad campaigns in media markets are cost prohibitive, and that running separate campaigns are not practical and a waste of precious resources. Instead, such campaigns should be coordinated for maximum effectiveness and cost savings. It was felt that this would best be handled through coordination at the state level. Some also mentioned that a "synergy" can be created by streamlining efforts with like-minded campaigns (e.g., water conservation, marine-debris action plan.)

**Status (May 23, 2006):** Continue consideration of statewide media relations effort. All agreed that such collaboration should strongly be considered in the future. Also, the idea of a statewide advertising campaign is part of the recently published Marine Debris Action Plan, and the California Anti-Litter Task Force's review of this plan should be followed closely.

2. **Social Marketing Research:** NPDES permittees and the Water Board need to spend more time on coordinating social marketing research to get a better handle on what makes an effective campaign, and in measuring effectiveness of campaigns and behavioral change. Since this is a universal need, it would be best

undertaken by the Water Boards (The Water Boards can build upon LA county, Orange county, SWRCB and any other social marketing studies);

**Status (May 23, 2006):** In the short-term, the group felt that the State Water Board may help fund training for both storm water regulatory staff and municipal storm water education managers on social marketing and other campaign development and assessment tools. In the long-term: the Water Board can help the state focus its messaging on key demographic groups that have posed a challenge regarding behavioral change. Also, the Board may assist in clustering counties who share priority pollutants, and thereby benefit the most from sharing similar advertising strategies and materials. The State can also help by continuing to conduct social marketing research on behalf of all municipalities within the state; and develop universal metrics for municipal program use.

3. **Maintain Local Control Over Certain Program Activities:** In an effort to streamline and share resources, municipalities should still be able to maintain local control over certain program activities, in which a lot of time and money have been invested. In light of that, it may be best to have the State Water Board only focus on activities that lend themselves well to such streamlining: such as the funding and implementation of social marketing research; statewide advertising; and training.
4. **Coordinate with Anti-Litter Task Force and Other Similar Efforts:** Continue coordination with the Waste Board's Anti-Litter Task Force to see how their Ocean-Marine Debris Action Plan might benefit this effort. The anti-litter group is also considering a streamlined education-outreach effort, and this will be placed in a statewide anti-litter strategic plan. Since litter is a key pollutant load faced by many NPDES phase I communities, such efforts need to be coordinated with this group's efforts.
5. **Revisit Permit Requirements:** The Water Board should revisit its storm water permit language - to help promote usage of existing materials; to develop more strategic objectives tied to real storm water needs drawn from social marketing and campaign studies; to integrate surveying techniques and methodologies; and to factor in contributions from MS4 permittees (such as school districts) in assisting cities educate youth.

**Status (May 23, 2006):** One suggestion called for using the previously mentioned assessment tools to help municipalities and storm water regulators get on the same page in establishing impression numbers and tailoring outreach strategies to best meet community needs. It was felt that this topic may also best be handled in the future by an ad hoc group comprised of Water Board and other storm water education practitioners. No other specific action was taken.

6. **Eliminate Government Program “Siloing”:** Many government programs and activities can be better coordinated to avoid what is known as “siloing,” in which people are unaware of what occurs outside their program. A stronger effort must be made at Cal/EPA to stop this from occurring in an effort to improve cross-program coordination and to avoid duplicative efforts.

**Status (May 23, 2006):** The State Water Board should develop an ad hoc committee that helps eliminate government siloing between agencies and programs. This group would network with other entities conducting similar storm water related work, and it could avoid duplication of effort and missed partnering opportunities.

### **School Education:**

7. **Youth Education:** Some participants felt that youth education was perhaps the best tool to help change polluting behaviors and orient a new generation on the importance of water protection. Participants said we should utilize good education programs to benefit other municipalities. These programs may include, but not limited to, the new water lessons tool created under Erase the Waste campaign, and the Orange County education program.
8. **Working with School Districts:** The Water Boards plan to work more with the approximately 650 school districts that will soon be, or are now under MS4 regulations, to implement these youth education programs. This would help lessen the burden of this important permit requirement now shouldered by cities (already under discussion internally at the Water Board). It can also create good partnerships between affected districts and adjoining NPDES cities.
9. **Cross-Mentoring:** The Water Boards and NPDES permittees can continue to promote cross-mentoring opportunities to engage high school and college students in assisting elementary schools implement storm water education lesson plans. (The mentoring graduation requirement in the LA Unified School District was cited as a good example of such a partnership). Continue to develop partnership with the California Department of Education’s Cal Serve program to pursue this.

### **Resource Sharing:**

10. **Sharing of Materials:** Many felt it was important to continue to share advertising, programs and collateral to avoid “reinventing the wheel”. The electronic resource library, created by the Water Boards and the California Storm Water Quality Association ([www.casqa.org/resourcelibrary](http://www.casqa.org/resourcelibrary)) should be heavily promoted and utilized. The Water Board also recently released a storm water

education toolbox that can serve this purpose. The Water Boards are actively promoting the availability of these tools.

11. **Point of Purchase Communications:** It was recommended that NPDES permittees share point of purchase materials as an invaluable way to utilize retail partnerships to further promote storm water pollution messaging. (Such items can be shared on the CASQA resource library and promoted through statewide trainings.)
12. **Phase II Training:** Promote the use of the ETW new training series to work with phase II's on development of cost-effective storm water outreach programs, and to continue to promote the use and modification of existing programs and materials. These trainings focus on media relations, community outreach, partnership development and youth education. Another module focuses on developing outreach programs on a tight budget.

#### **Legal Matters:**

13. **Enforcement to Encourage Behavioral Change:** It was recommended that the Water Boards and NPDES municipalities consider using enforcement as a tool to encourage behavioral change (e.g., heavy fines for discarding cigarette butts as a deterrent). The group referenced anti-smog and anti-smoke hotlines as promising efforts, but indicated such concepts need additional funding for staffing and follow-through in order for them to be fully effective.

**Status (May 23, 2006):** The group felt that over the long term, the State Water Board and storm water efforts should align with similar efforts being considered under the Marine Debris Action Plan (which promotes increased enforcement as a key mechanism to aid in pollution prevention and reduction efforts.) In the short-term, the Water Board should consider ways to re-focus energies on enforcement. (Such an effort is currently under way; the Board recently hired a new enforcement chief to strengthen the Board's enforcement presence. Results of this action plan will be shared with that office.)

14. **Legislative Changes:** Some cited the difficulty in getting bond money, loans and grants to support education programs due to legal restrictions. This should be revisited to make it easier for municipalities, non-government organizations and service providers to access needed funds to promote storm water pollution education.