Communicating about Clean Water

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Choose Clean Water COALITION

Stop using jargon

Instead of talking about the TMDL and WIPs, use blueprint instead. It creates a vision that people can understand.

Choose your words carefully

Bad words	Instead, use these
TMDLs	Pollution limits
WIPs	State and local clean water plans or blueprints
Pollution diet	Pollution limits
Rain Tax	Polluted runoff fee

Use visual words

Words that *may* have issues	Try these words instead
BMP's	Conservation practices
Regulations	Protections or safeguards
Stormwater	Polluted runoff
Low impact development (LID)	Modern and efficient infrastructure
Watershed	Land around rivers and streams
Water quality	Clean water/polluted water
Urban sprawl	Wasteful and inefficient development
Impaired	Polluted
Green infrastructure	Common sense solutions
Nutrients	Over fertilization

The Research

- Awareness of stormwater is low.
- The “Rain Tax” moniker is predictably damaging.
- Voters feel lied to.
- Voters are focused on transparency and accountability.
- Voters can be significantly persuaded once they learn the substance of the proposal.

Our job is to talk about polluted runoff through the lens of the values of the people that we are talking to.

Key Message Elements

- Shared values: Clean water is vital to our health, our quality of life and the future of our communities and our families
- Problem: Polluted runoff is the only major source of water pollution on the rise
- Proven solution: There are real solutions to polluted runoff which are proven, common sense and cost-effective.

Key Message Elements

- Local benefits: Polluted runoff is a local problem with a local solution that produces direct local benefits.
- Shared responsibility: We *all* share a responsibility for creating the problem of polluted runoff and contributing to its solution.

Message Points

Polluted runoff from urban and suburban areas is the only source of pollution to our waterways that is increasing.

We know how to fix it: by replacing aging infrastructure and creating buffers and green space to filter runoff.

Identifying *local polluted runoff problems* is a first step to communicating effectively.

For messaging find local examples of:

- Homes or streets that flood
- Local beaches that are closed
- Fish consumption warnings caused by polluted runoff
- Sewage overflows
- Scientific data that reports the pollutants in local waterways

Local Solutions

- Show that the problem of uncontrolled, polluted runoff can be ***solved locally*** through simple, proven solutions.
- Simple, common sense solutions to polluted runoff (ponds, planting trees, stream buffers) should be highlighted while the more “non-traditional, green infrastructure” solutions should be deemphasized in communications.

LOCAL PROBLEM + LOCAL COMMON SENSE SOLUTIONS = LOCAL BENEFITS

Messaging

The problem isn't rain – it's pollution.

And we have a choice to make: do we handle it now, or leave the bill for our kids who will deal with the unfair burden tomorrow, and our neighbors who face flooding and pollution today.

Messaging

Runoff pollution is real – it is responsible for beach closures and fish consumption advisories, as well as localized flooding and property damage.

Messaging – Stormwater Fees

The funding is raised within each county, and stays within that county - a local solution to a local problem. The money does not go into a state fund.

Messaging – Stormwater Fees

There is accountability and transparency. The income and the spending for the programs can be tracked by the county's auditors. Many counties have annual reporting requirements. Scientific monitoring will verify that the projects are effective and efficient.

Explain in Simple Terms

- How our solutions work
- Where they have worked before
- What scientists think of the problem

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY
Watershed Protection and Restoration Program
Bringing Green Jobs, Revitalization and Clean Water to Prince George's County
Required by a Federal mandate, the Watershed Protection and Restoration Program instructs Maryland's nine largest counties and the City of Baltimore to establish a funding plan to pay for stormwater management improvements by July 1, 2013.
This program provides an opportunity for Prince George's County to revitalize aging neighborhoods, launch a green economy and put people to work. It will benefit the County by creating 5,000 new jobs and new green local businesses; expanding existing local businesses and summer youth jobs programs; beautifying our neighborhoods; developing fellowship programs with local universities and colleges; and cleaning our waters.
CREATING 5,000 NEW JOBS
REVITALIZING AGING NEIGHBORHOODS
EXPANDING EXISTING AND LAUNCHING NEW GREEN, LOCAL BUSINESSES
DEVELOPING A FELLOWSHIP WITH LOCAL UNIVERSITIES AND BUSINESSES
Anacostia River
PROTECTING THE QUALITY OF OUR FUTURE WATER SUPPLY
MAKING OUR RIVERS AND STREAMS HEALTHY AND SAFE FOR RECREATIONAL USES
For more information on the program, please see the frequently asked questions on the back.

www.stormwatercommunications.org

www.choosecleanwater.org