

Illicit Discharges & Dumping Workgroup
Monday, December 15, 2008
9:30 AM to 10:30 AM

Individuals Present:

Pat Buzbee (Montgomery County); Linda Broach (TCEQ); Steven Johnston (TCEQ); Ralph Calvino (AECOM); Steve Hupp (HCPHES-EPH); James Walls (Harris County); Denise Hall (HCPHES-EPH); Robert Snoza (HCFCD); Dorene Hancock (City of Houston)

H-GAC Staff Present:

Rachel Powers; Erin Anderson

Brainstorm Session:

Rachel explained that the table everyone had been given would be used in the final I-Plan report to present the workgroups recommendations. The table format was taken from the San Antonio River Area Bacteria TMDL at the advice of TCEQ. One good thing about the table is that it includes the nine elements needed for 319 funding eligibility.

Additional Sources?

Divide direct discharges to ground/channel into toilets, homeless, and other people.

Implementation Activities for Sources

- Toilets
 - walk channels and map dischargers
 - have repaired
- Homeless
 - walk channels and map camps
 - port-o-potties conveniently located
 - housing, shelters
- People at events/boat ramps/parks
 - port-o-potties available
- Hauling of waste
 - better control of waste haulers
 - monitor trip tickets
- Dumping of waste
 - better control of waste haulers
 - monitor trip tickets
- SSO (give this information to SSO group)
 - Walking channel/dry weather outfall identification
 - dry and wet weather screening

- optimize screening based on past history where SSOs have been focus efforts there
- require quicker reporting of SSOs
- TCEQ plan SSO initiative was mentioned
- require reporting to local authorities in addition to TCEQ and require them to be more accurate
- Unpermitted/permitted facilities' stormwater runoff
 - walking channel
- Grease traps tied into SW system
 - walking channel
 - dry weather outfall identification

Are penalties tough enough? Do they cause a reduction in bacteria, or do people just go back to doing what they were doing? Do they accept a lien on their property?

- The penalties are good, but getting to that point is tough sometimes.
- Violations can be dealt with in criminal or civil court.
- Inspections are minimal by TCEQ; more inspections are needed.
- Penalties need to happen faster and be more certain.
- Judges need to be on board, understand the rules more so that they won't throw violations out.
- Or could do some educational program or upgrade your system in lieu of paying a fine.
- If there was a way to give a citation with an associated fine then they could choose to pay the fine or fight the citation in court. The fine would need to be high enough to deter future violations, but low enough so that individuals/companies would choose to pay the fine and not fight it in court. Would need to go through the legislative process to obtain these powers.
- Montgomery County would like to set up an environmental court, but they need to find funds for a prosecutor.

Next meeting:

Thursday, January 15, 2008, 2:45 PM to 3:45 PM, H-GAC offices, Conference Room C

Homework:

- Continue filling in the blanks of the table
- Think about how the IAs should be prioritized