



**Mississippi GOMA Public Meeting
January 31, 2006**

Mississippi State University (MSU) Coastal Research and Extension Center (CREC)

**Community Workshop Small Group Session (1 of 3)
Polluter Pays: Industry Should Pay Pollution Costs**

Facilitator: Cheryl McClary

Recorder: Steve Goff

1. What role should the public play in helping to resolve this issue?

- Report Industrial pollution issues
- Make it public, i.e. media
- Attend public meetings and permit hearings for potential polluters.
- Demand accountability from the enforcement and compliance agencies.
- Don't purchase products from polluting companies.
- Industrial pollution concerns/issues should stress a need for the collection of factual information. Concerns may or may not be a reality.
- A study to determine if industry is really paying their fair share of the cost of treatment and disposal.

2. What role should the government play at the local, state, and/or federal level in helping to resolve this issue?

- A periodic review of current standards of pollution allowances.
- Standardization of pollution allowances nationwide.
- Tracking or chain of custody of suspected "pollutants of concern" should be better documented.
- Consistent enforcement of existing regulations.
- No "emergency" permitting without public input.



**Mississippi-Alabama GOMA Stakeholder Meeting
January 31, 2006**

Mississippi State University (MSU) Coastal Research and Extension Center (CREC)

**Community Workshop Small Group Session (2 of 3)
Water Quality Issues including sewage, Bay issues, and sedimentation**

Facilitator: Jennifer Buchanan

Recorder: Marian Dicas

1. What role should the public play in helping to resolve education/engagement/communication for the health of the Gulf of Mexico?

- Attend more public meetings; become more involved
- Identify local water quality problems and concerns (be the eyes for the government....look at what's going on and help)
- Speak up
- Educate ourselves on the importance of these issues. Reaching out to the younger generation; join local stakeholders; educate ourselves through the media; agency websites
- Pay attention to household pollutants introduced into our ecosystem (e.g., hurricane clean-up efforts...stop contributing to the problem...properly dispose of products)
- Advocate recycling programs; go beyond minimum standards
- Development; the public can watch out for developers who exacerbate the issues; report violations; be pro-active; explain impacts to violators. Existing regulatory requirements help control violations, and many developers try to conform to regulations (or are open to new ideas)...maybe promote more BMPs.
- Consider alternatives to popular household products.
- More public service announcements
- Communities could form groups to address issues. There is strength in numbers.

2. What role should the government play at the local, state, and/or federal level in helping to resolve education/engagement/communication the health of the Gulf of Mexico?

- Explore "green taxes." Tax what you want to avoid (e.g., burning coal); make the polluter pay.
- Tax incentives that support sustainable development practices.
- Remove all combined sewer and drainage systems (local government tactic).
- ****Communicate effectively. Show people what the problem is and what actions are being taken to resolve it. Communicate and translate effectively.

- Be pro-active rather than reactive; build proper infrastructure to start with, so you don't spend lots of money fixing the problems as they occur; stay on top of technology; build in process for maintaining infrastructure.
- Establish citizen advisory committees/citizen boards that mediate b/w government agencies and the public. Gov't needs to be more accountable for actions.
- Form better alliances b/w agencies so that they communicate properly with each other rather than become absorbed with individual budgets. MS Watershed Management Program does this (Coastal Basin Team).
- Permit green solutions to environmental issues. Change codes if necessary.
- An advocacy body through agency alliances that advocates citizen wants/needs. It must be attached to the agencies in order to be effective.
- It's too easy for the government to get around responsibility for actions associated with environmental impacts
- Strengthen Administrative Procedures Act to better inform the public.



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**Community Workshop Small Group Session (3 of 3)
Upstream concerns related to nutrient loading**

Facilitator: Christy Loper

Recorder: Teresa Stadler

1. What role should the public play in helping to resolve this issue?

- Education – us versus me.... What have you done for your Gulf today? Water quality for swimmers. Monitoring and getting information out to the public. Mississippi River is cause for color of Mississippi Sound (silt and fine sediments).
- Why it is special here.
- Reduce future population to reduce impacts of people on the environment.
- Organic farming to reduce pesticides and fertilizer usage. Use purchasing power to facilitate organic farmer growth.
- Media Campaign to make use of the NOAA weather channel as an environmental education plan for nutrient loading – a fact ... did you know??? Gauged to general public.
- Drainage for 32 states. Hypoxic zones increase. Development along watershed (golf courses, etc). everything drains into the Gulf. Help people to be better stewards.

2. What role should the government play at the local, state, and/or federal level in helping to resolve this issue?

- Incentives for organic farming.
- More government encouragement for special days for the environment.
- Starting environmental education as young as possible.
- Show how nutrient loading/pollution of Gulf affects rest of the country – seafood, oil production, etc. Show cause and effect – media campaign.
- Monitoring of upstream nutrient loading, so there is accountability for each state and/or industry.
- Standards for dumping from upstream states. Monitor dumping of large plants, casinos, condos, etc.