

Draft Meeting Notes (V.2)
Public Information, Involvement, and Assurance Work Group
April 6, 2007 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM

Members Present

Arlene Tavani	Monterey Peninsula Water Management District
Steven Leonard	California American Water Company
Ron Weitzman	Monterey FLOW
George Riley	Citizens for Public Water
John Fischer	Member of the Public

Observers

Eric Zigas	CPUC (ESA Water)
Jud Vandevere	Citizens for Public Water

Chairperson Kasower convened the group and instructed the members that they were responsible for reporting the group's progress in a status report to the Regional Plenary Oversight Group REPOG at the next meeting.

The Public Information, Involvement, and Assurance Work Group began deliberations with the issue of "distrust in the community" over facts and details concerning water supplies. The discussion touched upon what builds trust between publics and the agencies that serve them and what if anything the Regional Dialogue process could do to improve the situation. Issues raised were:

- Terminology. Public sentiment is "perception-based" and thus we should be aware of the words that we use. For example, our Regional Dialogue groups should discuss water supply reliability and its values to the community in supporting our present lifestyles and environment. We should be careful not to equate the need for reliable water with the "growth-no-growth" sentiment.
- The Regional Dialogue process is the first time in the community that the public has been included in the process as equal partners. This role provides a different perspective about the issues and may provide a key opportunity to better communicate the role of water supplies in resolving those issues.
- There may be some unique opportunities for better communication that the Regional Dialogue process brings. What are those?
 - Participating agencies can claim this positive regional process for their own by putting out newsletters that reflect what the Regional Dialogue process is doing. Such newsletters would exhibit all participating agencies' logos and speak to the unified themes coming from the process. The plenary group could also put out a newsletter representing the unified position of all participating agencies; this newsletter would contain the logos of all these agencies to demonstrate their unified position.
 - Press releases should also be considered with the same formats as newsletters and contain all participating agencies' logos.

- The principles exhibited by the Regional Dialogue are that collaborating agencies and their publics are endeavoring to identify regional water solutions that are “**affordable, attainable, and implementable.**”
- We should identify the regional values and not focus on the traditional agency perspective of “borders.”
- Speakers’ bureaus should be formed from the regional partnership. Speakers would be able to address the regional message from numerous vantage points based, of course, on their technical and advocacy perspectives. By “advocacy” we mean that this process has value to each participant that we do not wish to eliminate. Notably, each participant brings to this process his/her personal or agency perspectives. We expect that this process will, at some point, satisfy each participant to a greater degree. Thus, we do not wish to present the audiences with a monolithic perspective. Rather, our strength is truly how we are finding and identifying a process where vastly varied perspectives have been treated with respect and are reflected in our work in a unifying fashion.
- Town hall meetings would attract more citizens who need to understand what we have undertaken in the regional process.
- It is imperative that the participating agencies learn to speak with a unified voice. It leads to public mistrust when each agency contradicts the other and disagrees about what should be “facts,”
- In order to propagate the unified message, we should prepare “question and answer” documents that address who we are, what we are trying to do and what we expect to achieve with the public’s help. The Q&A documents might also address technical and governmental issues, such as costs and legal hurdles and will be provided to all participating agencies.

Next Steps

The Public Information, Involvement, and Assurance Work Group raised a number of important analytical opportunities for the Regional Dialogue process to support. There were no priorities or decisions made by this group at this point.