GETTING FROM SEPTIC TO SEWER

How to Find the Right Solutions for Your Community AND Get Re-elected

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WHY IS THIS TOPIC IMPORTANT TO ME?

Jackson Blue Springs

Silver Springs
A HISTORY OF SEPTIC TANKS

• In use since the turn of the 20th century
• Housing boom outgrew the rate of sewer construction
• Today septic systems serve more than 1 in 5 households in the US
THE NUMBERS IN FLORIDA

- Approximately 2.6 million septic tanks are in Florida
- 12% of the septic tanks in the US are in Florida
- Approximately 30% of the state relies on septic tanks
Many septic systems are failing.

Even those in perfect operation discharge nitrogen at high levels.
• Septic systems have been put in sensitive areas
• 2016 Springs Protection Legislation identified FDEP, Local Governments, and Utilities as responsible parties
• 2016 massive algal bloom in the Indian River Lagoon
• FDEP went on a state tour to discuss the CHALLENGES!
A HOT TOPIC OF A LOT OF STAKEHOLDERS

- Regulators
  - FDEP
  - FDOH
  - WMDs
- Local Governments/Utilities
- Environmental Groups
- Property Rights Groups
- Builders/Realtors
- Legislators
- John Q. Citizen
SEPTIC TO SEWER CHALLENGES

- Engineering (not really)
- Cost & Funding
- **Sustained Political Leadership**
- Public Education and Acceptance
- On-going Proliferation of New OSTDSs
SUSTAINED POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

- A controversial topic at best
- Local commitment is expected
  - Mandatory connection ordinances
  - Matching funds
  - Utility rate structures to address future needs
- Focus on the future
“IN OUR EVERY DELIBERATION, WE MUST CONSIDER THE IMPACT OF OUR DECISIONS ON THE NEXT SEVEN GENERATIONS.”

THE GREAT LAW OF THE IROquoIS CONFEDERACY
SUSTAINED POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

• How to pursue septic to sewer and get re-elected
  • Timing is everything
  • Build a coalition of champions
  • Use your local sparkplugs
  • Balance environmental protection and economic development
• Use available regulatory and academic support
• Know the facts
• Funding is key
TIMING IS EVERYTHING

• Set the stage
• Take advantage of media stories
• Manage your council/commission agenda
• Don’t do anything drastic right before elections
BUILD A COALITION OF CHAMPIONS

- Chamber
- Builders
- Realtors
- Environmental Community
- Academe
- Regulators
- Media
- FDOH
USE YOUR LOCAL SPARKPLUGS

• One that initiates or gives impetus to an undertaking
  • Passionate advocate
  • Respected collaborator
  • Tenacious influencer
BALANCING ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
ACADEMIC AND REGULATORY SUPPORT

- Educated resource
- Unbiased perspective
ACADEMIC AND REGULATORY SUPPORT

• Educated resource
• Unbiased perspective
• Regulatory insistence
KNOW THE FACTS

• Understand the technical details
• Know where to get the back up data
• Understand the regulatory requirements
• Understand the legislative mandates
FUNDING IS KEY!

- Grant funding may be available
- Consider fairness to all residents
- Low income alternatives
• Septic to sewer is being implemented successfully in some areas
• Other areas are facing challenges
• It requires long-term commitment at local and state levels
• We have to get the word out
• Funding is key!
THANK YOU