

Barbara Paget

From: Gregory N Carr
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To: Barbara Paget
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i attended the workshop Friday in SF and would like to offer some thoughts...no need to include these comments in your formal record. I had a chance to talk briefly with Margarita after the meeting regarding possible ways that the outreach effort could be improved.

I worked for 30 years in the long range planning function for Sonoma County...and was responsible for overseeing the public outreach efforts for numerous regulatory initiatives that were controversial. One of the main things that i learned in that job was that there is always someone who questions the level of outreach. Of course, the greatest criticism of the process always comes from those who disagree with the proposal that is finally put forward after all the public input is offered.

Some suggestions....take or leave as you see fit

1. Don't leave any rock unturned re the initial effort to contact people. Your workshops are a great first step. Try to use TV/radio to reach folks who don't normally read newspaper notices or access the internet. Seems like a press release and personal pitch to the major statewide networks would get some help, especially given their responsibility to carry public service messages. Also i would suggest a personal plea to each of the editors of the major newspapers to provide space for an editorial written by your staff.
2. One method that we used with some effectiveness was individual stakeholder meetings. Obviously this is more practical at the local level, but the same principles apply. Seek out the leaders of the major statewide groups who support or oppose the Act or who may have a stake in the implementation and offer to meet with them on an informal basis...main purpose is to inform and seek involvement...not to reach agreement on the result. It occurs to me that there may be interests that opposed the Act...and that are now laying back or hoping that the process fails. These are folks who need to be contacted and offered the opportunity to be involved. Even if they refuse, you've made the effort. One thing I've wondered about is how the affected elected officials feel about this....would be nice to have a way to get some formal comments from them, if possible
3. At the workshop, a couple of the group representatives offered their assistance to your staff in the implementation of the Act. While these offers seem to be made with the best of intentions, i would be cautious. Depending upon what they do, the assistance may be perceived as undue influence of the Auditor's office. The exception is assistance in public outreach. Its amazing how much help in this area an organized group can provide. These groups are often willing to make the personal contacts with interested folks that you simply don't have the time to make.

good luck!...and thanks