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Water Quality Listening Session

Commenter's Affiliation	Comment
Nongovernmental Organization	The goals are right but where are you getting answer to goals? It is important to incorporate all water quality problems such as nutrients, pathogens, storm water and other pollutants.
Nongovernmental Organization	How is the data for water quality being gathered? In Alabama, there are major issues with sewage and septic tank treatment, so it is important to enhance, protect and build better sewage treatment plants. We also have zoning problems and pathogens in the water.
Nongovernmental Organization	As you develop projects, think about multiple uses for projects, and multiple benefits. How can we streamline the process and get all the parties to work together to get something done to protect water quality. We need to look at restoration projects that have worked in the past.
Nongovernmental Organization	Make sure to create a decision making body and make sure that it has the tools to make decisions. The Citizens Advisory Committee is a good addition to the process. Create a holistic decision making process and base the decision on science and put the people back to work that have been effected.
Nongovernmental Organization	Locally, we need to be educated on the issues (e.g. stormwater in AL) and keep local governments involved. Nationally, we need to make people more aware on a of how their lives intersect with the Gulf of Mexico (signage, marketing, etc). Education programs are an important need. We do need national education programs about the Gulf.
Nongovernmental Organization	Storm water should be regulated the same as waste water.
Local Government	We need a check and balance system that makes sure the projects are done right.
Local Government	The goals are good, broad, and can be all-encompassing.
Local Government	It will be important to set short-term achievable goals so that people see progress, even though it might be incremental progress. Then plan for more long-term projects. Outcome will have to depend on funding. We need a strong sense of where funding will come from. Where is the funding coming from? We need to do regional work.



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Local Government	With regard to water quality, how are pharmaceuticals an issue, and will there be action on this issue? Another issue would be air deposition from a lot of coal-fired plants that are presenting a lot of problems in Florida waters, and perhaps the Gulf of Mexico at large. Everybody needs to become more aware of stormwater and other pollutants at the regional level and find a good level for the region.
Local Government	We need local presence and education. How can we connect people upstream to the Gulf. We need programs that connect the gulf to a national level about education.
Academia	We encourage education and outreach. Encourages involvement of HBCU/MSI and provide an opportunity for undergraduates to be involved
Academia	Goal 2 and 4 mention nothing about Science.
Academia	Could EPA have national input some way?
Academia	Have water quality tests from the gulf go to middle schools students to analyze this will create awareness for younger people to learn about the science.
Academia	Can we create a water map to replace the weather map that people can look at to see the water quality parameters around them? And then complete a web based survey that measures success and bio indicators to measure success.
Nongovernmental Organization	The Task Force has an opportunity to make sure that different existing policies that are already out there are being followed, in addition to developing new ones.
Nongovernmental Organization	What if we have the funding and what if we do not have funding? What policies are being enforced? How to make sure we get tangible actions by the TF?

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Nongovernmental Organization	Make sure that permitting issues are looked at. We need to work upstream and keep the pollution from coming into the gulf in the first place. The Task Force needs to focus far upstream to make sure that the pollution doesn't get into main water bodies instead of trying to clean it up when it gets there. In doing this, keep in mind local roles in regulation and educate legislators to make sure that they don't undo local regulations that help.
Nongovernmental Organization	Additionally, regulate and find a minimum bar for agriculture so that we can see immediate results and remember that states can regulate agriculture.
Nongovernmental Organization	We need leadership to inform governments to more forward and not backward. Regulation should be used to make individuals clean up aquaculture. Also, crack down on development in wetlands and flood plains because we need better enforcement. Crack down on individuals (groups) destroying wetlands.
Nongovernmental Organization	Point sources are a problem, so look at point-source as well as non-point-source as issues.
Nongovernmental Organization	Success would be a reduced Dead zone, and no more beach closures due to pathogens or other pollutants.
Academia	Can we bring local communities and empower the people? We should bring in local leaders in the communities to help clean up the region. The Task Force needs to bring the information to the public and enhance community awareness. The Web site should ask for feedback at the federal level through the use of a "survey monkey" or other method to generate more feedback from a larger group.
Academia	Education program idea: send Gulf of Mexico water to middle schools so that they can look at difference in pH, quality, etc. and create awareness. Also, the Mississippi River basin program should be expanded. The Task Force should establish a program that shows water quality so that it is something that everyone can see.
General Public	Hit them in the heart to lead them to contribute to improving GOM without necessarily even knowing it.



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Nongovernmental Organization	We need to look at the little things like our own yards and education. Make sure that people understand the effects of what they do -- things add up.