Managing Stormwater in California
Our Current Crisis and a New Pathway to Sustainability

Bay Area Watershed Network Conference

March 19, 2015

By Mitch Avalon
Consultant, County Engineers Association of California

Pine Creek Flooding, Concord 1958
Overview

- Background
- Definitions
- How stormwater services are funded
- Stormwater Initiative
- Opportunities

Nature’s Water Cycle
Anatomy of California Water Portfolio

Water Portfolio

- Drinking Water Sector
- Sanitary Sewer Sector
- Stormwater Sector

Quality
Retention
Drainage
Flood
Stormwater is......

Stormwater Retention and Infiltration

Regional Flood Protection

Community Drainage

Stormwater Quality
\[ \frac{218}{1996} = \text{Voting Requirements} \]
Proposition 218 Voting Requirements

Proposition 218 requires approval of a majority vote of property owners or two-thirds vote of electorate in the service area for any property related fee or charge except fees or charges for sewer, water and refuse collection services.
Current Water Portfolio

Resource
- Drinking Water Sector
- Sanitary Sewer Sector
- Stormwater Sector
  - Quality
  - Retention
  - Drainage
  - Flood

Funding
- Water Utilities
- Wastewater Utilities
- Cities, Counties, Flood Control Districts

Rate Structure
- Water Utilities
- Wastewater Utilities
- No Rate Structure

Management
- Voting Exempt
- Voting Exempt
- Voting Required
Contra Costa County Example

- 2012 Clean Water Funding Initiative
- Property related fee
- Ballot sent to all County property owners
- Process time: 1 ½ years
- Cost: $1.5 million
- Outcome: 60% “No” votes
How CCC Stormwater is Funded

Percent of Entire Tax Bill - Based on $500,000 home in Walnut Creek

- Bay Area Air Quality: $10 = 0.16%
- CCC Mosquito Abatement Dist.: $13 = 0.21%
- **County Clean Water:** $35 = 0.57%
- **County Flood Control:** $46 = 0.75%
- BART: $55 = 0.88%
- EBMUD Water: $78 = 1.3%
- East Bay Regional Parks: $188 = 3.0%
- CCCSD Sewer: $472 = 7.6%
- City of Walnut Creek: $536 = 8.7%
- Fire/Emergency: $670 = 11%
- County General Fund: $779 = 13%
- Schools: $3305 = 53%
Society’s Investment in Stormwater

Annual Costs Based on $500,000 home/family in Walnut Creek

- Stormwater: $81
- Garbage: $360
- Sewer: $472
- Water: $750
- Cab/Ph/Net: $1,440
- PG&E: $1,800
- Cell Phone: $2,400
Stormwater Initiative

- Goal: “Utility” status for stormwater similar to water and wastewater
- Exempt stormwater agencies from voter requirements like water districts or wastewater districts
- Need a Constitutional Amendment approved by the legislature (67% vote)
- California voters will decide whether to grant an exemption for stormwater (50% vote)
- Stormwater is a valuable resource! Stormwater and its infrastructure is important for our health and prosperity
AB 1362 Omnibus Act Amendment

“Stormwater” means any system of public improvements or service intended to provide for the quality, conservation, control, or conveyance of waters that land on or drain across the natural or man-made landscape.
Stormwater Initiative Process

- AB 1362 introduced, need Constitutional Amendment
- Aiming for 2016 election
- Coalition pushing Initiative forward
- Need campaign to support ballot measure
Two Step Process

**Step One:** Ballot measure approves exemption, grants same authority to local government as water and wastewater districts to fund operations.

**Step Two:** Each local government agency/area, if desired, goes through a political process to:
- Establish a “utility”
- Determine scope and level of services
- Determine rates
- Determine rate structure
Opportunities

- More emphasis on resources and resource management
- More interest in water and resources conservation
- Offsets or alternative compliance to the built environment
- More pressure to preserve watershed function in “Step Two”
- Increased funding for wetlands and stormwater treatment
Opportunities

• Naturalize traditional flood protection infrastructure
• Restructure stormwater services
• Develop all-encompassing watershed plans
• Plan and implement creek restoration projects
• Increased funding for watershed coordinators
• Develop financial partnerships with Flood Control Districts
Stormwater Initiative

• It is not a **TAX!**

• Clarification of Proposition 218 exemptions

• Recognizes stormwater as a basic service

• Completes adequate funding for our total water portfolio