

OEHHA Perspective on draft “Safe to Eat Portal”

September 29, 2009

Monitoring Council



April 2 MC Revisited

- BOG is a qualified expert group
- Add relevant organizations
- Others need a reason to work on portal
 - Potential loss of control of message
 - Potential for portal to over-reach presentation
 - Web products \neq evaluation
 - More web sites \neq efficiency
- Beyond portal
 - Coordination of monitoring

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Portal Issues: Testing

- Four other staff tested portal & commented
- Tested at work and at home (public access)
- Problems with links, and loading & understanding map assessments
- MC “test/fix” as you go approach different from standard agency approach
- OEHHA briefing: Jon & Karen
 - OEHHA’s Director asked that comments be addressed before portal released

Portal Issues: Audience

- Public is the primary audience for advisories
- Portal audience?: unclear, skewed towards agencies, not public
 - Map assessments not accessible to general public
- Showing multiple approaches, problems, inconsistencies, issues is not a good way to get positive public response

Portal Issues: MC goals

- Highlighting work vs raising issues
- MC Disclaimer: goals & responsibility
- New assessments:
 - Is creating new assessments an MC goal?
 - Who is directing these?
 - Are new assessments supporting states' work (efficiency)?

Portal Issues: Confusion

- OEHHA not only reviewer to note confusion
- DON'T CREATE ASSESSMENTS THAT LOOK LIKE ADVISORIES
 - “Advisories” associate a fish and water body with a consumption level, but there is no formula
 - » ATLs just one step
 - Every presentation doesn't have to address the safe to eat question
 - » Some questions are about the data
- DON'T CONFUSE THE PUBLIC
- Is it wise to ask questions and not have information that answers them?

April 2 MC revisited 2

- OEHHA's goal is a comprehensive approach to public health.
- Balanced message about fish consumption.
- Public health message: fish are good for you, people should eat them. Choose wisely.
- Challenge: studies have shown that advisory messages have scared people. Stopped eating fish. Not good.
- Some presentations using "health thresholds" can give the wrong message.
- Over-reach: try to be all things. Don't over-steer headlights of expertise and data.

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Sum of Portal Issues

- Focus on creating working foundation
- Why should OEHHA support the portal if it is going to confuse the public about advisory messages?
- Why would people return to a portal that does not work well and doesn't answer their questions?
- Is raising issues worth frustrating the public?