



Big Ideas for Cleaner Water

A Plan to Reduce Bacteria in the Houston-Galveston Region

A Plan to Reduce Bacteria

We have bacteria in our waterways

The State of Texas sets standards to establish whether waterways are safe for recreational activities, such as swimming or wading. Most rivers, bayous, creeks and streams in the Houston-Galveston region have bacteria levels that are higher than the state-accepted level.

Bacteria comes from many sources

Bacteria comes from many sources, including, but not limited to, improper maintenance of wastewater treatment facilities and sanitary sewer systems, failing septic systems, runoff pollution, illegal dumping and animal wastes.

Everyone is affected by bacteria

More than 4 million people live in the affected areas, which includes waterways in parts of 10 counties: Brazoria, Fort Bend, Galveston, Grimes, Harris, Liberty, Montgomery, San Jacinto, Walker and Waller.

The Bacteria Implementation Group

In 2008, a group of government, business, and community leaders was formed with a common goal of developing a plan for reducing bacteria in area waterways. A full roster of this Bacteria Implementation Group (BIG) is available at www.h-gac.com/BIG.

Project Area and Impaired Waterways



We have a plan

To reduce bacteria in waterways, the BIG developed an Implementation Plan, or I-Plan, offering a menu of water protection activities to be completed by municipalities, industries, land owners and residents. The draft I-Plan is available online at www.h-gac.com/BIG.

The Houston-Galveston Area Council

The Houston-Galveston Area Council is a voluntary association of cities, counties and special districts in the Greater Houston area of Southeast Texas. H-GAC provides staff support for the BIG and development of the I-Plan.



I-Plan Activities

The following short list of I-Plan bacteria-reduction activities is organized by bacteria source.

Wastewater Treatment Facilities

- Strengthen monitoring requirements
- Retrofit facilities not meeting current performance standards
- Improve design and operation criteria for new plants
- Encourage regionalization for out-of-compliance facilities
- Allow unannounced inspections to increase enforcement



Sanitary Sewer Systems

- Require all systems develop and implement a proactive management program
- Protect against power outages at lift stations with backup power supplies, quick connects and mobile generators
- Report systems failures

On-Site Sewage Facilities

- Identify failing and old systems
- Require maintenance or repair on malfunctioning systems

Storm Water and Land Development

- Expand storm water quality programs
- Design a recognition program for voluntary bacteria reduction measures incorporated in new developments
- Petition the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality to reimburse the costs of bacteria reduction measures completed by MUDs and other special-purpose districts

Residential Sources

- Provide public education on proper disposal of fats, oils, grease and pet wastes

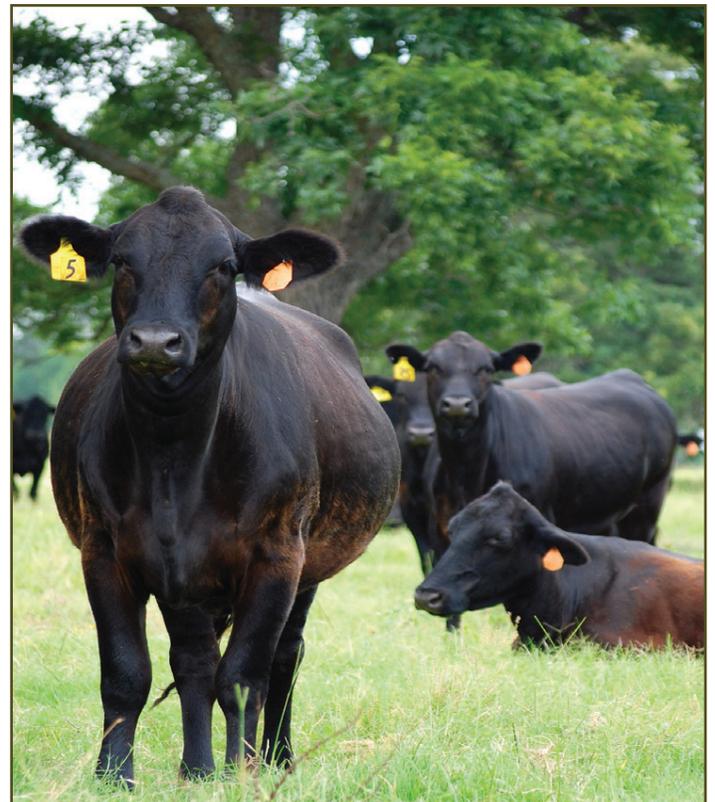


Illicit Discharges and Dumping Sources

- Better control of waste hauler activities
- Monitor channels to detect, map and eliminate illicit discharges

Agriculture and Animal Sources

- Expand existing programs, such as erosion control, nutrient reduction and livestock management



Show Your Support

Resolve to Make a Difference

The I-Plan is a common-sense approach for reducing bacteria levels in our waterways and providing better services to citizens. However, for the plan to work, we need your help. Please consider adopting a formal resolution of support for this bacteria reduction plan. The resolution will show your commitment to voluntarily participating in bacteria reduction activities that are appropriate for your community.



Your support indicates that you:

- Value clean water in our rivers, bayous, creeks, and streams.
- Understand that many of our waterways are designated as inappropriate for recreational activities because of the presence of elevated levels of bacteria.
- Acknowledge that the plan is a consensus document developed through a stakeholder-led process.
- Support participation in implementation activities as appropriate for your entity, including voluntary activities and progress reports.
- Urge other entities in the region to work together to reduce bacteria contributions to our bayous, rivers, and streams.

The I-Plan is available online at www.h-gac.com/BIG, e-mail rachel.powers@h-gac.com or call 713-993-4559 to receive a copy. Sign up at www.h-gac.com/BIG to learn more about upcoming meetings, workshops and water quality activities in your neighborhood.

The work doesn't stop when the I-Plan is approved. You'll have opportunities to help make adjustments to the plan as we continue to work for reduced bacteria.



The Bacteria Reduction
Implementation Plan
www.h-gac.com/BIG
713-993-4559



Texas Commission on
Environmental
Quality Region 12
www.tceq.state.tx.us
713-767-3500



Houston-Galveston
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