Shrinking Budgets and More Powerful Microscopes

A Tale of Budget Cuts, Regulation and Protecting Public Health

Mark Hildebrand, Water Quality Division
Funding

• 34% cut in General Revenue in last 4 years
• $26 Million taken from agency revolving fund (fees, court settlements, voluntary clean up funds)
• $3 Million taken from tire recycling fund
Legislation

- DEQ can contract with nonprofit entity for training and technical assistance
- Agencies must promote uses of produced water and marginal quality waters
- Timeline for water reuse for potable purposes
- Regulatory regime for ASR to be established
- Declares water a “compelling state interest”
- Oil and gas agency has emergency environmental authority
- Legislature must approve all rule changes
Regulated Community Scrutiny

• Was the PWS program really efficient?
• Was the agency doing the right things with the funding?
• Was the agency imposing regulations above the federal minimum?
• Did the agency really need to charge fees?
• Was there really a need for a state laboratory?

YES
Agency Adjustments

• Moved to a “program” structure
• Shifted activities from one division to another
  – Decreased certain inspections
  – Sanitary Survey frequency reduced
• Moved positions from wastewater to drinking water
• Added new engineering positions to drinking water
• Moved to “regional approach” for compliance coordinators
Inquiries

• Media
• EPA
• Political
• Private citizens
Near Tragedies

• Extreme Weather Events
• Circus City, USA
Extreme Weather Events

Lone Chimney Intake – 3\textsuperscript{rd} level exposed

OKC – Lake Hefner – raw water for over 1M people

Town of Ravia – well house under water
Moral of these stories...