



North Central Texas Council of Governments

SUMMARY

North Texas Grease Abatement Council

Tuesday, June 24, 2014

1:30 p.m., Regional Forum Room

NCTCOG Offices, CPII

616 Six Flags Drive, Arlington, Texas 76011

1. Welcome and introductions.

DISCUSSION

2. **Flushable wipes.** Nalani introduces the topic, TRA gives a special presentation, and members discuss potential actions (if any).

Nalani introduced the topic with the “Fatberg’ dead ahead!” news article and the Maine WasteWater Control Association’s pilot education campaign.

Val Jean-Bart and Abbie Gardner from Trinity River Authority (TRA) went over the following during their presentation: flushable wipes—advertised as “flushable” but do not biodegrade or break down; the lack of current regulations; INDA’s voluntary guidelines; and the cultural attitude of the toilet being a second trashcan. Flushables can overwhelm municipal systems and create problems for septic systems and private plumbing. As flushable wipes cause many of the same issues as fats, oils, and grease do (property damage, health hazards, environmental problems), TRA thought the NTGAC would be a great partner for a flushable wipes campaign. The campaign is in the design/brainstorm phase and will be presented to its upper management.

The council was asked about their experiences with the issue and their interest in participating in TRA’s campaign.

- Dallas doesn’t have a problem yet, but see its potential and would be interested in an educational campaign.
- Irving has “Don’t flush it” at city events and bill inserts.
- Upper Trinity Regional Water District (UTRWD) said the issue has a big impact on its collection system, and that it’s not just wipes, but also single-use products.
- Bedford said water bill inserts are very effective.
- TRA suggested getting the airport engaged.

Suggestions that emerged during the discussion:

- Make it about more than flushable wipes—highlight the idea of the toilet not being a trashcan. Other campaigns: “Only put these three things in...”
- Education for younger people at schools.

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- Target change in behavior, not just education.
- Contact Maine WasteWater Control Association or others with similar campaigns (Goldstreet Design – Think Before You Flush, Clark Regional Wastewater – Smart Bunny) and ask if we can use their collateral/commercials, editing/making it our own.
- INDA has database with cost on maintenance and problems—might want to incorporate that information.
- Include languages other than English (e.g., Vietnamese and Spanish).
- Potential avenues: Group media buys, radio spots, cable TV ads (can zoom in on ZIP codes, affordable), water bill inserts, social media (Facebook, Twitter), newsletters and email blasts, movie theater ads, a slide on local/city TV station channels, and infographics (such as INDA's infographic)/visual messages, and stickers for toilets or stalls.
- Farther down the road—could do press kits, maybe even enlist nurses to help spread the word.

If TRA created the marketing materials, the council cities would be willing to distribute it. At the next NTGAC meeting, TRA will provide a campaign update and the group can discuss the plan and costs in more depth.

3. **Future projects.** Discuss holiday planning. Also gauge the need for additional Grease Interceptors brochures, and if more cities want to be included.

The group brainstormed on potential holiday projects. They discussed:

- Turkey tags on frozen turkeys.
- Ads to increase awareness of free grease drop-offs—put a half-page flyer or signage by the fryers at locations such as Tom Thumb, Lowe's, and Home Depot or by the oils at grocery stores.
- Stickers on oil containers (partnering with Sam's or Costco).
- Sponsoring a regional FOG Collection Day.
 - Possibly an annual event, either the Monday or Tuesday after Thanksgiving or late December/early January.
 - Could promote with ESPN ad for Monday night football or radio ads, a slide on a local TV channel; show participating communities and drop-off points on Cease the Grease website.
 - Rendering: Partner with biodiesel company.
 - Collection points: Potentially partner with Cowboys, Rangers, or Mavericks for an event; fire departments; or have a city collect from several locations and have the biodiesel company pick up from the city.
 - Potential issues: Spillage—consider screw-top bottle and funnel?

Other suggested projects:

- Southwest Food Expo (June 2015).
- Grease Interceptors brochures (potentially updated with more cities).
- Posters.
- Stickers for wipes.

NCTCOG staff will consult with the Public Education Task Force about the turkey tag, sticker, and flyer ideas as well as some of the discussed future project options.



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4. **Cost share and budget.** Discuss cost share and budget.

The group was amenable to a formal work plan and cost share. The program bank has approximately \$4000. NCTCOG staff will work on a cost-share formula based on population and send more information to the group.

OTHER BUSINESS AND ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

5. **Roundtable.** Members will be asked to share what is happening in their communities.

- Dallas – Presenting at summer camps; also working on media campaign (ads, banners, Facebook, geofencing).
- Garland – Just started working on program last year; two drop-off locations and adding another two or three. (Gives oil to Dallas.) By the oil at Kroger's and Fiesta, has signs with drop-off locations. Held a grease drop-off competition with a school after Thanksgiving. Next time, contest will be between fifth graders at four or so schools.
- North Richland Hills – Drop-off program, free pickup.
- Plano – FOG giveaways at Learn to Live Green festival and others.
- UTRWD – No pretreatment program. Working with customers on grease trap ordinances.
- Mansfield – Working on getting a hazardous waste drop-off facility—currently collecting at City Hall. For sanitary sewer overflows, using flyers to let people know about grease campaign.
- Coppell – Looking to roll out a Cease the Grease program next year.
- Carrollton – No budget for Cease the Grease, so trading for advertising. Passing out flyers to apartment complexes.
- Watauga – Looking into a Cease the Grease program.
- North Texas Municipal Water District – Programs of varying degrees. Has quarterly meetings with cities to collaborate.
- Trinity River Authority – Passing information on to customer cities.
- Arlington – Working on Ecofest. Firemen will show attendees how to fry turkey safely. Also showcasing Grease for Greens. Advertised (including Facebook and Twitter) and will have gift certificate for raffle.

6. **Schedule for the next meeting.** To be determined.

The group decided to meet in late August or early September.

7. **Adjournment.**

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