



Defining Policies and Legislation on Environmental Public Health for State Legislatures

Environmental Public Health Leadership Institute (EPHLI)

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National Conference of State Legislatures

Problem Statement

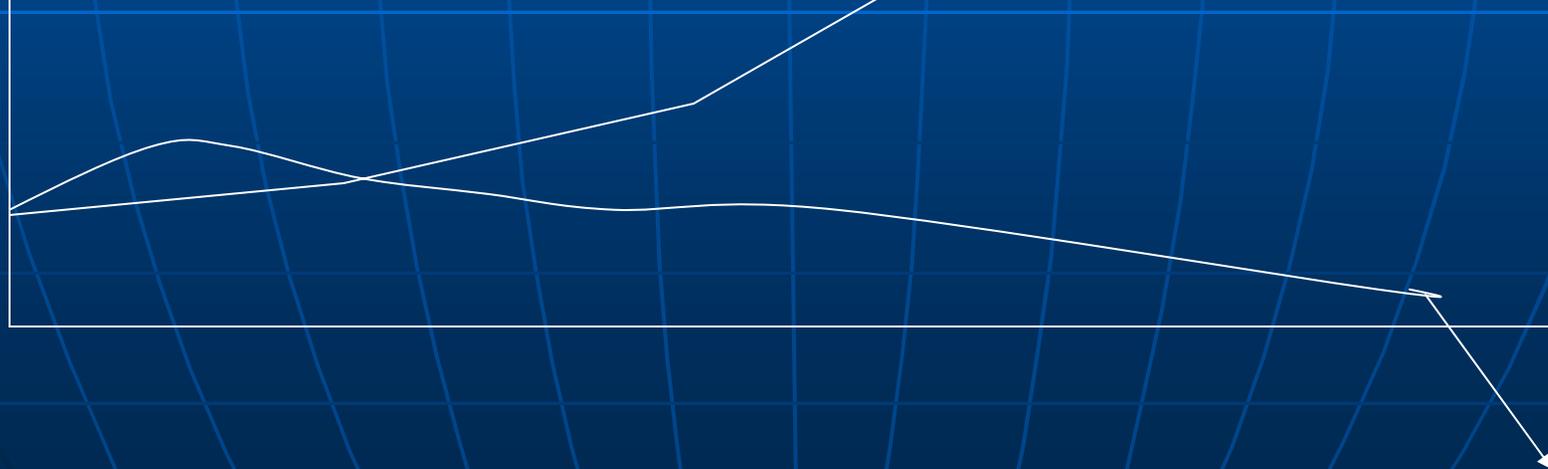
Public health, and especially **environmental public health** (EPH), has no direct contact with state policy makers, unless (or until) a crisis occurs, requiring state resources and reaction, or when a program is created, requiring legislative authorization. **EPH programs are designed to avoid crises**, and give the public a level of protection from environmental harms. By its structure and mission, EPH is designed to avoid any contact or relationships with state policy makers.

Behavior over Time Graph

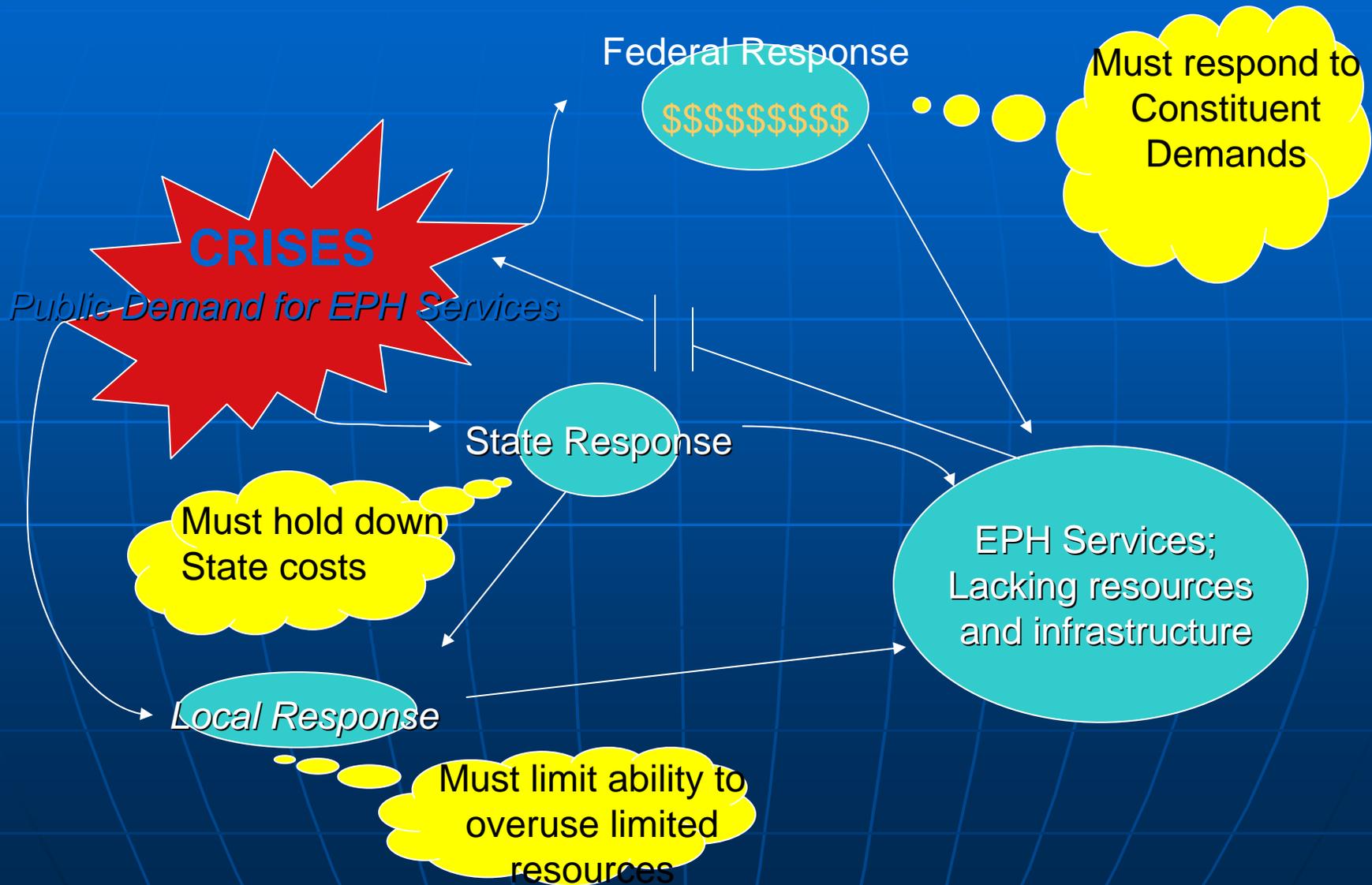
Level of Interest of EPH among Policy Makers v. Time

- *Since it began with good support, it was assumed that support for EPH would continue to grow*
- *In reality it grew at first then began to slowly decline as programs become implemented and public demand decreased*

Level of Interest v. Time



Advocates for Growth



What do they think?

"I grew up in Kellogg, Idaho. I played in the tailings from the lead mines; I ate fish from the streams laced with lead wastes. And look at me – I'm a state senator."

Senator David Peitch, Idaho

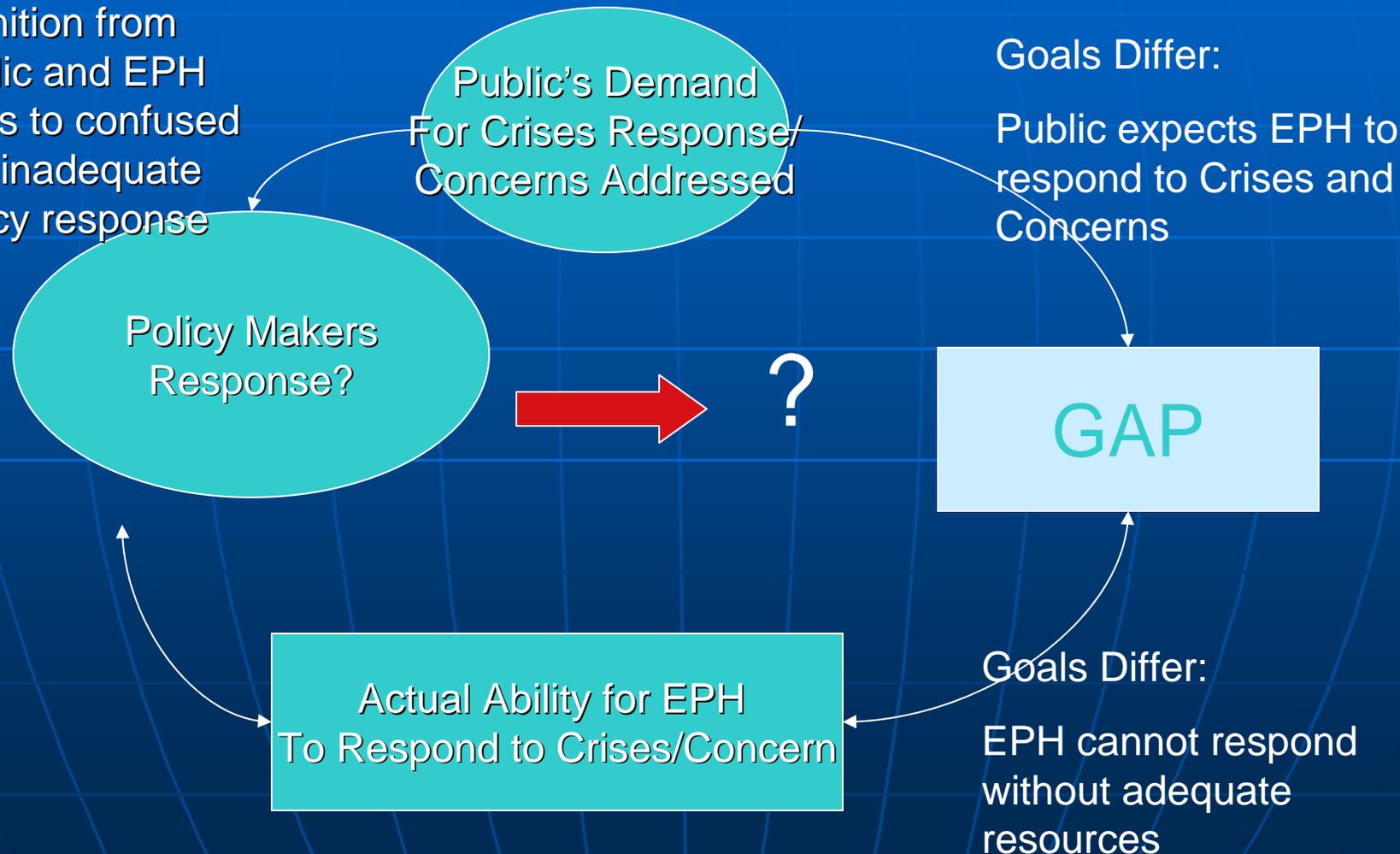
"Show me the dead bodies."

Former EPA Region 8 (and former state senator) David Rayley, upon being presented the reasons for regulating toxic wastes

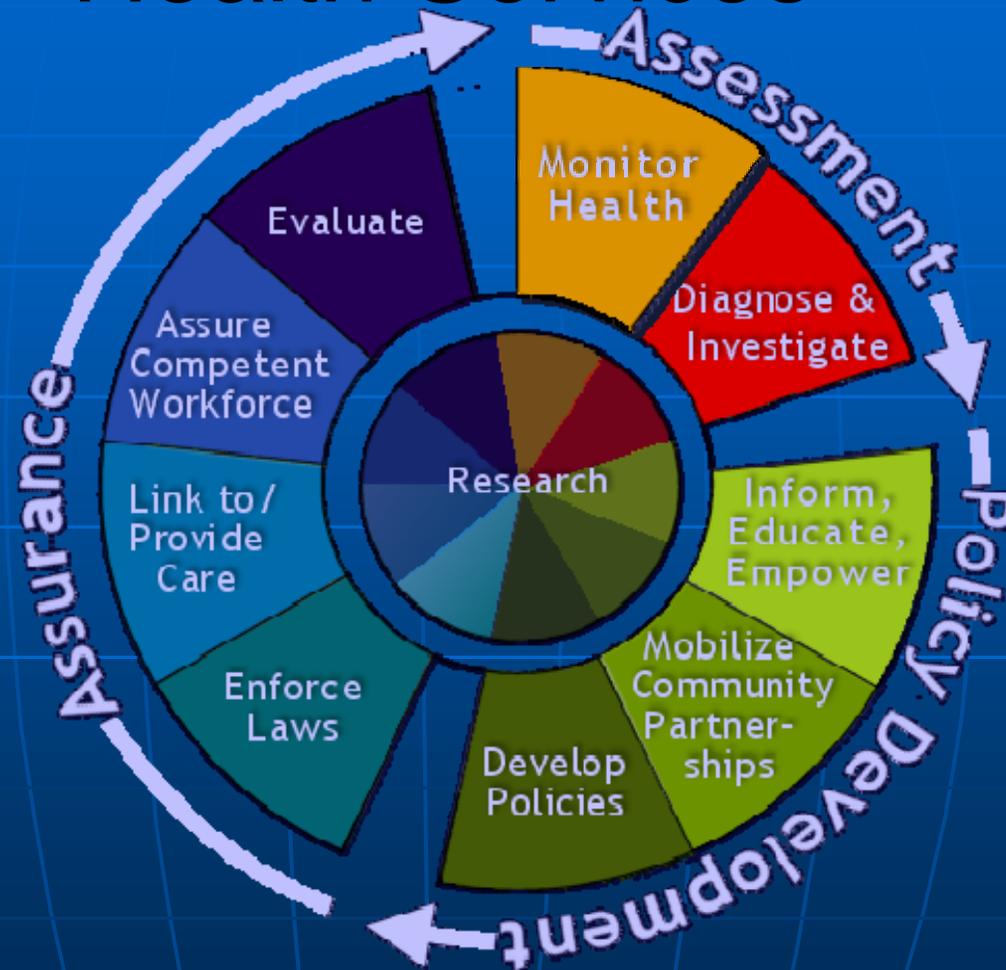
Failure to Agree on Goals

“what we have here is a failure to communicate”

Lack of clear definition from Public and EPH leads to confused and inadequate Policy response



The 10 Essential Environmental Health Services



Program Goals

- Collect environmental public health statutes from every state and territory

WebPage database:

<http://www.ncsl.org/programs/environ/envhealth/environmentalhealth.cfm>

EPH Statute Topic Identified:

Air Quality Indoor Outdoor	Mercury
Asbestos	Mold
Asthma	Mosquito Control
Biomonitoring	Pesticides
Chemical Agents	Solid Waste
Children's Environmental Health	Toxics
Hazardous Waste	Tracking and Surveillance
Lead Hazard Reduction	Water Quality

Program Goals

Procedural Efforts

■ **Survey State Legislators**

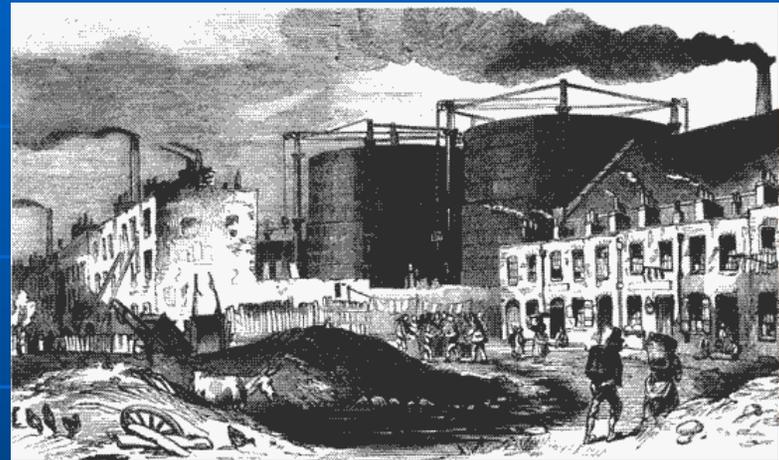
- Series of questions designed after consultation with ASTHO, NEHA and state environmental health directors

■ **Survey State Environmental Health Directors**

- Spoke with Glen Takeoka, CA director; Pat Curran, NC director; Lisa Conti, FL director; Jim Brownlee, NJ director; Walter Combs, RI director

How do you get Policy Makers attention??

- **Highlight a crises**
 - Perceived or real
 - Doomsday threats have limited appeal
- **Appeal to a higher authority**
 - Moral reasons



Conclusions - Factors to aid enlightening and communicating with state policy makers

- Unified mission statements for all EPH agencies, with clear direction and joint goals
- Providing basic learning session (EPH 101) to legislative committees with jurisdiction over EPH programs early in the legislative sessions
- Requiring legislative review (sunset provisions) of EPH statutes, to ensure relevancy and update provisions
- Providing training opportunities for legislative chairs and staff on EPH; give them an overview of EPH programs, funding streams, and effect on public and business community.
- Provide indicators (annually, or at least once a session) of the state's environmental health, the number of people affected by EPH's efforts, money saved, business benefits (restaurant inspections, food safety), level of federal support
- Give EPH directors authority to communicate directly to state legislators, as they do the public

Can we make a change?

"Anyone who doesn't believe in miracles is not a realist."

David Ben-Gurion

Thank You!



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www.heartlandcenters.slu.edu/ephli/index.html