Stakeholder Involvement in the Development of Water Management Policy

The cornerstone of any successful public policy is the ability to meaningfully engage all affected stakeholders in the policy development process. While obtaining and analyzing stakeholder input can be time consuming, it is a crucial component of ensuring a fair and balanced policy. This concept is evident in Governor Bentley’s directive to the Alabama Water Agencies Working Group to include stakeholder input in their recommendations. The Alabama Rivers Alliance has been hosting meetings throughout the past year to inform and discuss the state’s water planning process with a diverse group of citizens and interests from all across the state. This presentation will provide a qualitative analysis of different methods of stakeholder involvement, including pros and cons of each method. A summary of feedback and examples from the ARA symposiums will be presented as well as examples from other states’ stakeholder processes in developing water policy. The analysis will provide a basis for discussing how Alabama can enhance stakeholder involvement to improve the chances of successful development and implementation of a comprehensive water management policy.

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