Water without Borders
Another Drop Panel Event
The Politics of Policymaking

November 22, 2011
Politics, Policymaking: some personal reflections

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Hamilton, November 22nd 2011
QUESTIONS?

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WATER WITHOUT BORDERS
PROGRAM

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**WHO SHOULD DRIVE POLICY?**

Elected Government has responsibility and accountability for policy

- Shift in location of policy formulation: Premier's Office
- Election-campaign manifestos (policy platforms)

Policy Input: **Engagement**

- Private sector
- Think tanks
- Universities
- General public (Environmental Bill of Rights, Social Media??)
- Interest and advocacy groups

**Minority Government/Austerity Governing**

- Meeting policy challenges with tight budgets requires quality evidence
EVIDENCE BASED DECISION MAKING

- Shift from using intuition toward evidence based: policy input and policy audit
- Local air quality standards (rational document)
- Lead in drinking water testing (schools)
- MOE web-site: air, water and waste data
- Need to be smarter about evidence gathering and use
- Applied researchers strengthen ability to analyze, interpret and communicate
Who should drive Policy

- Normative (ideal) and Empirical (actual)
- WHO: political executive, administrative agencies, special interest groups, community groups, media
- WHAT: political considerations, ideology, party platform, needs and demands of citizens, bureaucratic preferences, capacity of interest groups, leadership style
- ‘WHAT’ could be more, if not as, important as ‘WHO’ in driving policy
Evidence-Based Decision-Making

- Enhance rationality & improve policy learning
- Replace intuitive policy assessments with data and evidence-based decision criteria
- Theoretically informed empirical analysis to promote policy learning; OR
- Learn from experience and avoid mistakes
- Evidence-based decision making makes policy proposals convincing and increases the potential for success
Role of Applied Researchers

- Resolve practical problems, using theories, knowledge and techniques
- Apply knowledge to context-specific cases to improve human condition
- Develop theoretical explanations from specific cases and contribute to theory building
- Bridge theory and practice
- **Link between ‘proximate’ policy makers and citizens**
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