

O'Rorke, Inc.

FY 2003-2004

**Regional Media Relations Campaign
Final Report**

BAY AREA STORMWATER MANAGEMENT AGENCIES ASSOCIATION

BAY AREA CLEAN WATER AGENCIES

July 1, 2003 – June 30, 2004

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FY 2003-2004 Regional Media Relations Campaign

Executive Summary

The two goals of the Bay Area Clean Water Agencies (BACWA) and the Bay Area Stormwater Management Agencies Association's (BASMAA) media relations campaign are to: 1) firmly establish the agencies as media contacts on water quality and pollution prevention issues, and 2) generate media coverage that encourages individuals to adopt behavior changes to prevent water pollution. In FY 03-04, the campaign has been successful in achieving both of these goals.

Media placements remained solid this year, with extensive coverage, particularly in print and on the web, and on a variety of topics including mercury, woodburning and hiring a pest control operator. Web placements more than doubled over those achieved in FY 02-03. Overall media coverage remained steady this year with a total of 44 story placements.

A wide range of planned news stories were pitched beginning in July 2003 through June 2004. Media coverage was pursued on six planned pitches: one each on first rains, woodburning, new development, the draft Mercury TMDL, hiring a pest control operator, and household hazardous waste. Additionally, two sets of previously developed PSAs were resubmitted to radio stations on burning gift wrap during the holiday season and pesticides. These media pitches resulted in very high-quality, in-depth coverage. Some placement highlights included cover stories on woodburning pollution in the Home and Garden section of the Alameda Newspaper Group papers and major stories by environmental writers in both the San Jose Mercury News and the San Francisco Chronicle on the development of the draft Mercury TMDL.

A notable achievement included collaboration with outside agencies that reached a new level this year with both the Clean Estuary Partnership and the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) contributing funding to support joint pitches. BASMAA/BACWA teamed up for another winter-time collaboration with BAAQMD. This year's effort focused on woodburning and was a highly-successful pitch. This is the agencies' third collaboration and the first time BAAQMD has ever contributed funds to such an effort. Additionally, the agencies worked with the Clean Estuary Partnership on the mercury TMDL pitch, with that group also lending financial support to the campaign.

The process of securing good media relationships continued this year, particularly with the San Jose Mercury News and the Fairfield Daily Republic. The campaign also scored a major hit with the Alameda Newspaper Group on the woodburning pitch—creating an in-road to place more stories with the Home & Garden editor at those papers. BASMAA/BACWA's pitch on hiring a pest control operator was just what the reporter ordered for Holly Hayes of the San Jose Mercury News and Patty Amador of the Fairfield Daily Republic who both commented on the editor-friendly press release that made it easy for them to use the piece without any additional legwork—something that is important to editors who are strapped for time. Relationships with Dory Culver of KCBS and Holly Hayes of the San Jose Mercury News continued to be strong.

Environmental reporters are looking forward to the next piece of the Mercury TMDL pitch since this year's pitch on the process of developing the TMDL piqued their interest.

There were two new components to this year's campaign. One was a media "e-mailer" designed to remind media personnel about the agencies and key spokespeople. This email was sent to the press twice in FY03-04 and resulted in two print placements and posting on the corresponding website. As a result of this outreach, Holly Hayes of the San Jose Mercury News interviewed Phil Bobel and three stories ran focusing on pesticides (diazinon), other household hazardous waste and the "Our Water, Our World" program. The second new component was the reuse of previously developed PSA copy. This resource friendly approach to garnering PSA coverage allowed the campaign to get placements on nine stations without having to use valuable campaign dollars on developing new creative pieces.

Overall, 44 articles and broadcast stories were covered by the media in FY 03-04, including 13 print articles, 20 radio stories, and 11 web stories. These results were achieved despite the fact that two planned pitches met with unforeseen obstacles and were not pursued (i.e., household hazardous waste disposal and mercury PSAs), and a third pitch fell short of expectations (i.e., new development). Public service announcements (PSAs) also aired on a total of nine radio stations. (See Appendix A, Press Report.)

O'Rourke estimates the value of the coverage that placed in FY03/04 to be \$115,350 if placements are viewed in comparison to the cost of advertising with these media outlets. This figure is down slightly from FY 02-03 because no television placements were made this year which is very costly coverage. The total value of this year's coverage represents a 5.5% decrease over FY 03-04 (See Appendix E, Figure 2) but the total number of story placements remained the same.

As Appendix E, Figure 3 illustrates, the agencies that contributed funding to the campaign received a tremendous return on their investment. The seven BASMAA members contributed an average of \$3,500. The five BACWA principal agencies contributed an average of \$5,000. Given the total value of coverage received in FY03-04 was \$115,350, each BASMAA member received approximately \$33.00 worth of coverage for every dollar invested in the campaign and each BACWA principal received \$23.00 worth of coverage for every dollar invested. The return was even greater for BACWA's associate members that invested fewer resources to the campaign than BACWA principals.

What follows is recommendations for FY04-05 and a complete report on the accomplishments for the major tasks as outlined in the FY 03-04 scope of work. Appendices include: Press Reports (Appendix A), Budget by Project (Appendix B), Print Articles (Appendix C), Circulation Information for Media Outlets (Appendix D), Comparison of FY00-01, FY01-02, FY02-03, and FY03-04 Media Placements (Appendix E, Figure 1), Comparison of Estimated Media Value (Appendix E, Figure 2), Comparison of Agency Contributions to Value of Media Coverage (Appendix E, Figure 3).

Recommendations for FY 2004-05

Recommendations for FY04-05 include the following:

- Maintain a strong presence with key reporters and media personnel; continue to pitch good quality stories on a regular basis.
- Make garnering television coverage a priority by working to specifically craft some pitches that will be attractive to television reporters and producers.
- Seek out new media personnel to build relationships with—particularly via the process of securing editorial board meetings and also by pursuing local television meteorologists to carry environmental messages during their weather reports.
- Utilize a calendar of seasonal pitches that will serve as signposts throughout the campaign year.
- Identify a roster of foreign language spokespeople so the campaign can concentrate more efforts on pitches to ethnic/in-language media using designated spokespeople.
- Ensure that the roster of pitches planned for FY 04-05 include a range from lighter, feature stories to those with more news potential for greater placement success.
- Evaluate campaign success by comparing number of placements and monetary value of media coverage garnered in FY04-05 to media coverage attained in previous years.
- Continue to seek out partnerships with agencies and organizations who can bring financial resources to the campaign.

Task A Accomplishments

Generate long-term relationships with regional media outlets and establish BASMAA/BACWA representatives as information sources on water quality and pollution prevention issues.

Building and maintaining relationships with the media continued in FY 03-04. Due to continuous, regular pitching to the media on behalf of the agencies, an excellent springboard existed from which to pitch BASMAA/BACWA's stories this year (see Task B). Relationships continued to be advanced in two ways. Media relationships were enhanced through the consistent, ongoing presence of the agencies and the quality of the stories pitched.

In part, media success is a numbers game. A basic fact holds true: the more pitches conducted over time increases the likelihood of more quality media coverage. Media success is also based on the variety of stories pitched. Going to the same beat reporters with great frequency can sometimes hurt a campaign, so the goal for this project has been to conduct a variety of pitches aimed at different media audiences—some to environmental reporters, other to home section editors, others to consumer reporters, to name a few. These rules of thumb have definitely held true for BASMAA/BACWA, as evidenced by the strong media foothold achieved by this campaign in the last six years. A variety of reporters know and respect our spokespeople and are always receptive to hearing our pitches.

To further enhance media relationships, an email was sent to media personnel twice in FY 03-04. This email was designed to be useful and worthwhile to media personnel. The copy was both brief and direct, with a short introduction followed by succinct biographical information on each of the agencies' four major spokespeople. The email also included information on scheduling an interview with the spokespeople and directed the media to the BACWA website, where the bios were also posted. This type of contact is extremely useful in that it provides information to the media in a way that isn't annoying to people who work on tight deadlines. Additionally, the information was a "keeper" in that it acknowledged the need that reporters have to find experts

for their stories. This very simple contact is an excellent way to stay in touch with the media. When the mailer was distributed in September, Holly Hayes, a reporter at the *San Jose Mercury News*, responded by requesting an interview with a BACWA spokesperson on pesticides. As a result, Phil Bobel was interviewed and two print stories ran as did three web placements.

Additionally, thank-you notes were prepared and/or reporters were called or emailed when stories were placed to foster good long-term relationships on behalf of BASMAA/BACWA.

Task A Recommendations:

- Send one email on each major spokesperson, highlighting their particular areas of expertise.
- Pitch good quality stories on a regular basis to maintain a strong presence with key reporters and media personnel.
- Utilize the BACWA website as a place to post background and contact information on the agencies' key media spokespeople for easy access by media personnel as needed.
- Capitalize on the media's interest in TMDLs by conducting serious news pitches as the TMDL process unfolds in the region. This will continue to solidify relationships with environmental reporters who have a hard news focus.
- Utilize any opportunities that arise to pitch a serious news story (e.g. Basin Plan Amendment and Mercury TMDL) by first pursuing editorial board meetings, if appropriate. These meetings can garner editorial support on a topic and build credibility for the agencies with the opinion makers—the editorial page editors—of the region's daily newspapers.
- Seek out the program “Envirocast” or pursue direct contact with local television meteorologists to integrate relevant water pollution information in weather forecasts.
- Remind spokespeople to use the name “Bay Area Clean Water Agencies” when being interviewed, both for name recognition and to avoid confusion with the media.

Task B Accomplishments

Generate balanced regional media coverage aimed at promoting individual behavior changes leading to water pollution prevention.

In FY03-04, stories were pitched to generate a large quantity of coverage on subject matter and to generate very high-quality coverage that addressed BASMAA/BACWA's key issues. Six media pitches were pursued for BASMAA/BACWA on the following topics: first rains, woodburning, new development, the draft TMDL for mercury, hiring a pest control operator, and household hazardous waste. Additionally, two sets of previously developed PSAs were resubmitted to radio stations this year on the following topics: burning gift wrap during the holiday season and pesticides. A summary of the coverage attained follows below.

Because this is a regional campaign, one goal is to ensure that the coverage attained reached the Bay Area-wide. This goal was attained as major stories ran on KCBS-AM, KSRO-AM, and KQED-FM and in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *San Jose Mercury News*, *Fairfield Daily Republic*, the *Oakland Tribune*, and numerous other East Bay dailies. This goal was further achieved by numerous stories being carried on media websites.

The web is a widely referenced medium for news and page hits for news. Websites have grown substantially in recent years. The interest in web media crosses geographical boundaries, so the San Jose Mercury News website, for example, is not just accessed by Santa Clara County residents. Often media outlets highlight their original coverage by placing existing stories on their website. Many consumers use the web as a news source while at work and studies show that younger consumers who might never buy a newspaper will read stories on the web—in short, web media is a growing area, expanding BASMAA/BACWA's potential for reaching a larger audience. Websites vary in how much their pages are viewed but this placement has independent value as website ads are sold separately; this is reflected in the return on investment.

First Rains

A press release was drafted around the first rains/first flush concept including a tie-in with the watershed concept and a focus on litter and trash as a pollutant. O'Rorke also worked with Vilcia Rodriguez to provide a Spanish spokesperson for this pitch. The press release was distributed to key media when significant rains fell in early November although there was interest from both English and Spanish media no actual placements were generated.

O'Rorke recommended re-pitching the story after significant rains, lasting two consecutive days or more occurred. The initial pitch was conceived as a "filler" story to enhance ongoing coverage of a storm event. The press release was distributed to key media when significant rains fell in early December 2003. Overall, this pitch resulted in 10 placements: 10 radio stories on KCBS AM and KSRO AM.

Woodburning

A press release, timed to be pitched during the holiday season was developed with the Bay Area Air Quality Management District. This pitch received phenomenal coverage and was even carried as a full-page cover story for the Home and Garden section of the Alameda Newspaper Group papers, which includes the Oakland Tribune. This pitch resulted in 19 placements: seven print stories, four radio stories, and eight web placements.

New Development

Extensive materials were developed in order to pitch a story to television reporters on new development requirements in the region as a trend in water pollution prevention. A fact sheet on the new regulatory requirements was developed, locations with pleasing new development design standards were also researched, photographed, and laid out in attractive fact sheets. Although this pitch did initially receive some interest, the feedback from the media was that there was no urgency to cover the topic as the new development regulations were not in effect in some parts of the region and there was no strong link to the average homeowner making repairs or improvements. This pitch resulted in no placements but may be revisited in 2005 when regulations are enacted in parts of the region.

Mercury TMDL

Working in close collaboration with the Clean Estuary Partnership (CEP), the BASMAA/BACWA campaign recommended a pitch on the development of the first total maximum daily load (TMDL) for the region. Talking points for our spokespeople were developed and fact sheets (developed by the CEP) were utilized. The pitch was timed to the release of the draft TMDL report by the Regional Water Quality Control Board. The San Francisco Chronicle ran its story on a Sunday—the best read day of the week. This pitch resulted in three placements: two print stories and one radio story.

Pest Control

A press release was developed offering consumers tips on seeking the services of a pest control operator. The release utilized information from the PCO fact sheet developed by the *Our Water, Our World* campaign and prominently included website information for accessing the full fact sheet. This pitch results in five placements: two print stories and three radio stories.

Household Hazardous Waste

A press release was developed specifically to deal with the wastewater pollution that results when household cleansers, cooking byproducts, and pharmaceuticals are improperly disposed of down inside drains. A press release and courtesy photo were developed with the goal of use by Home and Garden section editors. The pitch was not conducted due to the lack of consensus in the region on FOG (fats, oils and grease) messages and reluctance from household hazardous waste programs to promote new waste streams (e.g., pharmaceuticals) until new funding sources are identified.

Breaking News Response

A letter to the editor of the San Francisco Chronicle was prepared and sent under Geoff Brosseau and Don Birrer's signature in response to an article regarding cars as a source of air pollution that ran on July 10, 2003. The letter pointed out that cars are a source of air pollution and also the single biggest source of water pollution.

Residual Coverage from Media Mailer

The media e-mail that was sent in September 2003 resulted in several placements. In response to the mailer, Holly Hayes of the *San Jose Mercury News* conducted an interview with Phil Bobel focusing on pesticides. This outreach produced five placements: two print stories and three web placements.

Burning Gift Wrap PSAs

Previously written PSAs urging residents not to burn gift wrap during the holiday season were reused this year. This outreach resulted in six placements: six radio stations ran the PSAs.

Pesticide PSAs

Previously written PSAs on pesticides were also resubmitted to radio stations. Outreach to the media resulted in a radio interview with Geoff Brosseau and five media placements: three radio stations ran the PSAs and two radio stories aired stories.

Mercury PSAs

Re-sending previously used public service announcements for Mercury were planned for May 2004. However, the City of San Jose offered to create new PSAs to tie into the new TMDL for mercury. These PSAs are currently in development and the campaign is pending committee review in order to move forward with submitting the copy to radio stations in FY 04-05.

Value of PSAs Placed in FY 03-04

O'Rourke estimated the value of PSA coverage garnered in FY 03-04 at \$4,950. The value was estimated using two methods: actual declared value of PSAs if provided in affidavit form by a station, and by creating a formula after calculating an estimated number of times each station was likely to run the PSAs and assigning an average value across all stations.

To calculate the value of PSAs, last year's figures were reviewed and media sales representatives were consulted. Because there have been increases of about 10% in radio advertising rates this year, the average spot value was calculated at \$110 and it was assumed each station ran the PSAs five times. A total of nine stations ran BASMAA/BACWA's PSAs this year.

PSAs are usually sent in three lengths: 15, 25 and 30 seconds. Average value of PSA coverage was obtained by factoring in time of broadcast, current advertising rates and length of spots. Because most radio stations charge the same rate for 30-second PSAs as for 60-second PSAs, advertising rates for 30-second spots were used as the starting point for determining value.

Value of Media Placements in FY 03-04

Although there is no clear-cut way to assign monetary value to media coverage, the value of print articles and broadcast stories (collectively referred to as media placements) garnered in FY 03-04 is estimated at \$110,400. This figure was derived by reviewing all media placements and assigning a fair market value cost to them if they had been purchased as advertising time or space. For example, a quarter page ad in the San Francisco Chronicle's Home & Garden section costs \$7,600; an article of comparable size in the section, then, is valued accordingly. Currently peak drive-time rates on KCBS are about \$1,200. The typical news story will air on KCBS at least 12 times in one day, with most of those placements falling during peak drive-time hours. Additionally, O'Rourke sought out estimates on the value of tie-in internet coverage from media salespeople and those were included in the valuation. Note: Wire service stories and letters to the editor were not factored into this value estimate because there are no advertising comparisons to be made for these venues.

While media relations does not offer the guaranteed placements that advertising does, press coverage brings a special value to an effort that is hard to quantify. The credibility provided by a media outlet, a specific reporter or anchorperson to a story really elevates the quality of media coverage. People often naturally trust something they see on the evening news or read on page one of the San Francisco Chronicle or San Jose Mercury News. Today's consumers are also savvy to advertising and marketing practices aimed at getting them to buy products. For this reason, consumers increasingly view paid ads with skepticism. Media coverage avoids this kind of negativity entirely.

This year, an analysis of the past three years of the campaign was also conducted in order to take a critical look at media placements achieved and estimated coverage value over time. Although the media can be a fickle friend, particularly when covering stories related to government agencies and environmental issues, this campaign has remained strong over time. The campaign has consistently achieved high quality coverage on a diverse range of topics. For example, media success was achieved this year with the joint pitch with BAAQMD on woodsmoke pollution, getting the agencies' message out via feature stories. On the more serious end of the spectrum, environmental reporters from the San Francisco Chronicle and the San Joe Mercury News both covered the release of the draft mercury TMDL. These examples show that a range of pitches continues to be important for the campaign. What was also notable this year was the sharp increase in web stories.

Overall, the analysis indicates that the campaign has been consistent in achieving coverage and that the value of media coverage has remained fairly close to FY 02-03. In FY 03-04, media coverage value decreased by 5.5%, but the number of story placements remained the same. This can be explained by the fact that there was no television coverage this year (television is an extremely costly medium to purchase). Furthermore, two media pitches were not pursued by request, and one fell short of expectations. PSA placements actually increased in FY 03-04.

Total Value of PSAs and Media Placements in FY 03-04: \$115,350

Task B Recommendations:

- Use a calendar of seasonal pitches generated by BASMAA/BACWA that will occur throughout the year.
- Conduct a hard news pitch on the Mercury TMDL and Basin Plan Amendment that is expected to occur in 2004, if appropriate. Consider pursuing editorial board meetings as this pitch nears.
- Work to craft some pitches to be particularly attractive to television reporters and producers.
- Focus concerted pitches toward ethnic audiences through the use of ethnic media and bilingual spokespeople.
- Include a breaking news component as part of media pitches to allow the campaign flexibility in responding to news events as they occur. In FY 03-04 in particular, such responses netted good coverage for the campaign.
- Identify opportunities to collaborate on media pitches with other partners. BASMAA/BACWA's ongoing collaborations with the BAAQMD have proved successful in generating media coverage during the last two years. The new collaboration with the Clean Estuary Partnership is also achieving good results thus far.
- Include a variety of topics in the FY 04-05 work plan to keep campaign momentum going and to secure maximum media interest and placements. The topics should include a range from lighter, feature-oriented stories (how to hire a pest control operator) to more news-oriented topics (such as TMDLs).

APPENDIX A: Press Reports

PITCH	PRINT	RADIO	WEB	PSA'S	OVERALL PLACEMENT
Pesticide PSAs				KBLX FM ALICE FM KPOO FM	3
Pesticide (breaking news response)	<i>San Jose Mercury News</i> , “Alternative to Chemicals Abound” (10/24/2003) <i>San Jose Mercury News</i> , “How to Detox Your Garden Shed” (10/24/2003)	<i>Alice Radio</i> , interview re: pesticides Geoff Brosseau 6:00AM on 7/13 <i>Live 105</i> , interview re: pesticides Geoff Brosseau 7:00AM on 7/13	<i>San Jose Mercury News</i> , “How to Detox Your Home” (10/24/2003) <i>San Jose Mercury News</i> , “Alternative to Chemicals Abound” (10/24/2003) <i>San Jose Mercury News</i> , “How to Detox Your Garden Shed”		7
Wrapping paper PSA				KZYX FM KFRC FM KPOO FM KOHL FM KSJO FM KUFY FM	6
First Rains		<i>KCBS AM</i> aired interview with Phil Bobel (Sunday, December 7th: 7:20a.m.,8:26a.m., 11:40a.m.,1:50p.m., 5:40p.m. Monday, December 8th: 2:40a.m.,4:40a.m.) <i>KSRO AM</i> aired interview with Geoff Brosseau (Friday, December 5th: 3:00p.m., 4:00p.m.,5:00p.m.)			10

PITCH	PRINT	RADIO	WEB	PSA'S	OVERALL PLACEMENT
Mercury TMDL	<p><i>San Jose Mercury News</i>, "Bay Report Details Effects of Mercury" (4/30/2004)</p> <p><i>San Francisco Chronicle</i>, "New Plan to Cut Mercury Release into Bay" (5/1/2004)</p>	<p><i>KCBS AM</i> Interview with <i>Geoff Brosseau</i> aired Friday April 30th 5:30pm</p>			3
Woodburning BAAQMD	<p>Alameda Times Star 12/20/2003 The Argus 12/20/2003 Daily Review 12/20/2003 Oakland Tribune 12/20/2003 San Mateo County Times 12/20/2003 Tri Valley Herald 12/20/2003 San Francisco Chronicle 12/20/2003</p>	<p>KQEDFM 12/24/2003 12/26/2003</p> <p>KSRO AM 12/17/2003</p> <p>KCBS AM</p>	<p>KCBS AM</p> <p>The Argus</p> <p>San Mateo County Times</p> <p>Tri Valley Herald</p> <p>Daily Review</p> <p>Alameda Times Star</p> <p>Oakland Tribune</p> <p>San Francisco Chronicle</p>		19
Hiring a Pest Control Operator	<p>The Fairfield Daily Republic 5/30/2004 San Jose Mercury News 6/4/2004</p>	<p>KCBS AM (Eco Talk) 3 times</p>			5

APPENDIX B: Budget by Project

Tasks	Amount Spent
ORPR Services General Tasks, Mtg. Attendance, Reports, Work Plan Development, Final Report	\$6,320.00
ORPR Services Media Email Development and Distribution	\$1,540.00
ORPR Services Designated Pitches	\$24,611.00
ORPR Services Responses to Breaking News	\$2,284.00
Total Amount Spent	\$34,755.00
Total Budget	\$37,000.00
Total Remaining	\$2,245.00

APPENDIX D: Circulation & Average Audience Size Information

Radio

Average daily audience sizes for the following Bay Area radio stations:

ALICE -FM	=250,000 during morning show & 500,000 weekly
KBLX- FM	=310,000
KCBS-AM	=901,000
KFRC-FM	=Average .25hr 30,000 & 600,000 listeners per week
KOHL FM	=N/A non-commercial station not rated
KPOO-FM	=N/A station not rated
KQED-FM	= 598,000
KSJO- FM	=247,000
KSRO-AM	=36,000
KUFX- FM	=204,000
KZYY-FM	=22,500

Print

Average circulation for the following Bay Area newspapers:

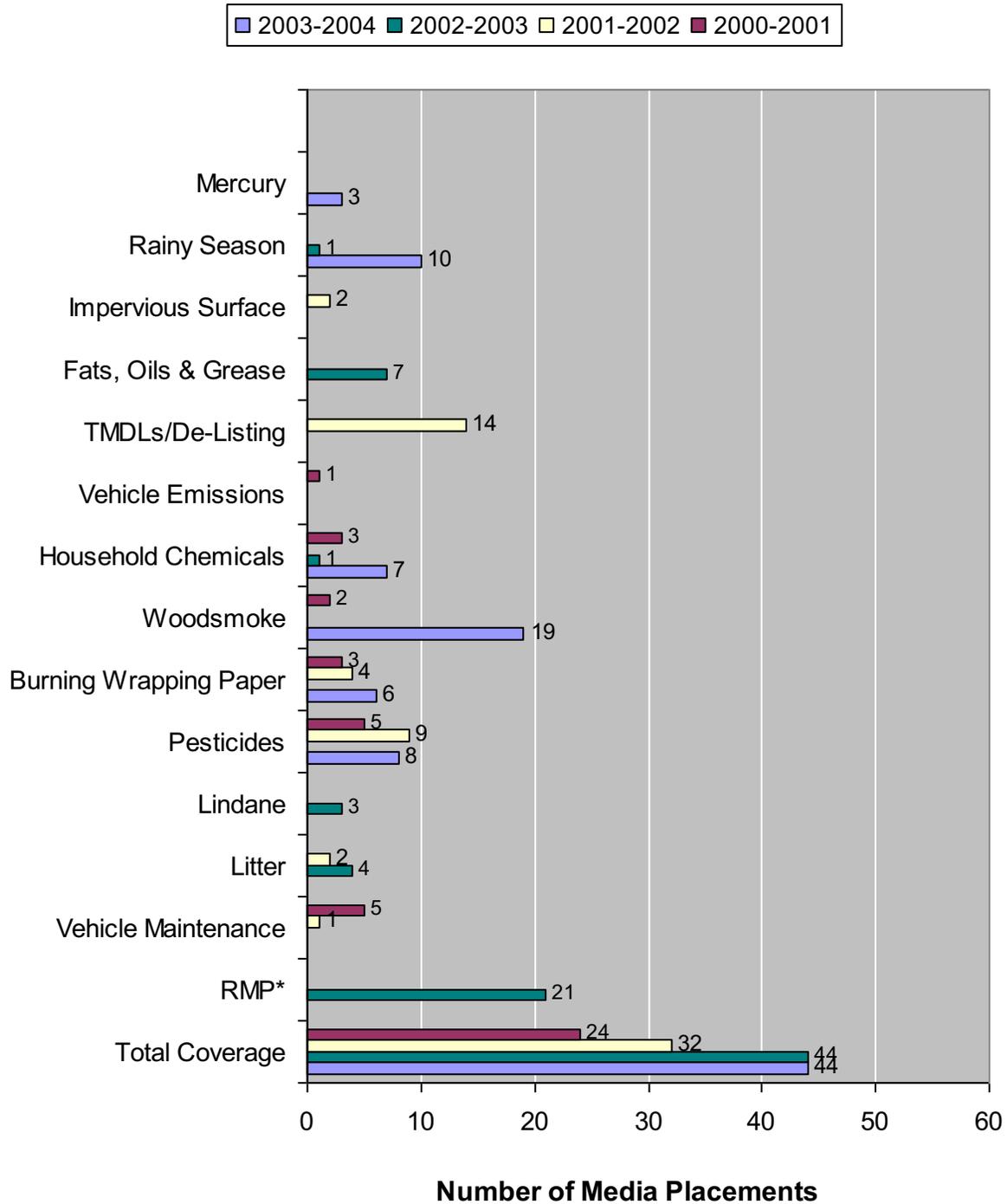
Alameda Times Star	=7,300
The Argus	=31,873
Daily Review	=37,000
Fairfield Daily Republic	=21,465
Marin Independent Journal	=40,267
Oakland Tribune	=67,308
San Francisco Chronicle	=527,466
San Jose Mercury News	=283,757
San Mateo County Times	=34,331
Tri-Valley Herald	=33,535

Internet

Average page views per month for the following websites:

Alameda Times Star	=149,000 page views per month
The Argus	=253,000 page views per month
Daily Review	=180,000 page views per month
KCBS-AM	=3 Million page views per month
Oakland Tribune	=1,494,000 Million page view per month
San Francisco Chronicle	=64 Million page views per month
San Mateo County Times	=277,000 page views per month
Tri Valley Herald	=216,000 page views per month

Figure 1. Comparison of Media Placements



*Regional Monitoring Program

Figure 2. Estimated Dollar Value of Media Coverage

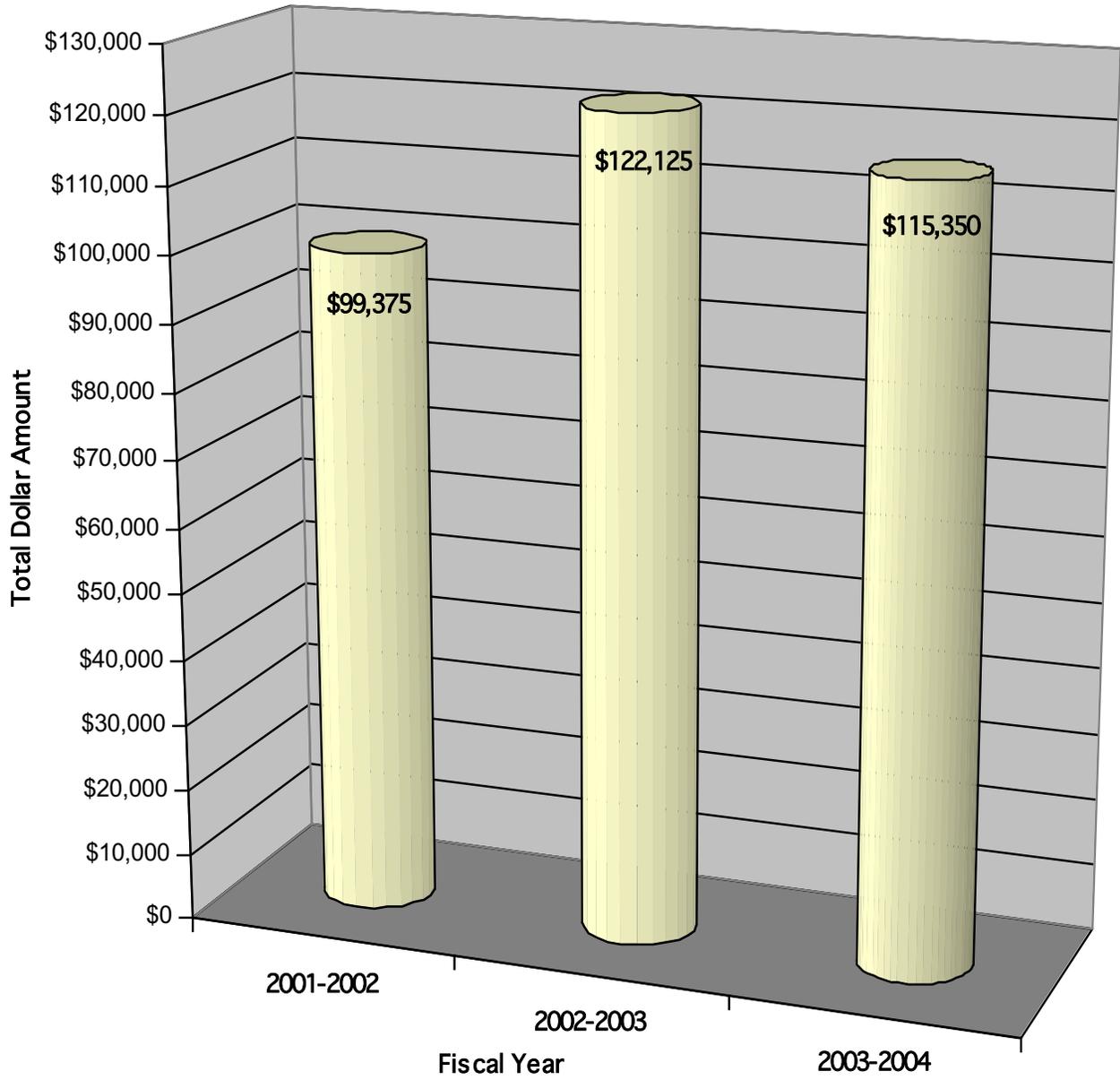
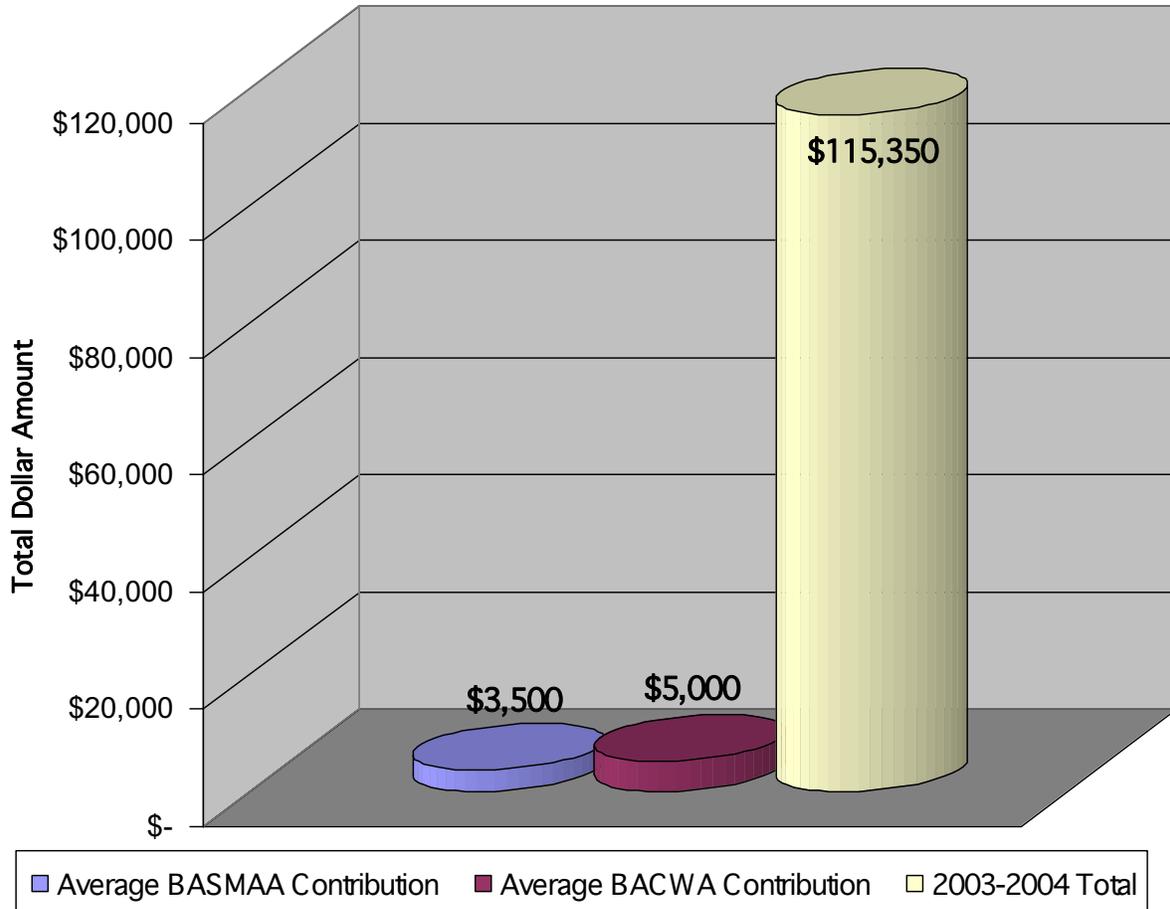


Figure 3. Comparison of Agency Contributions to Value of Media Coverage



- * BASMAA members received approximately \$33.00 of coverage for every dollar invested
- * BACWA members received approximately \$23.00 of coverage for every dollar invested