

Environmental Law Practicum

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**MODEL GRAY WATER  
ORDINANCE**

# Need/Problem Identification



媮 Current GA regulations classify gray water as sewage

媮 In order for gray water to be reused, it must be treated as if it were black water

# How is Gray Water Defined?

- 媮 GA: “wastewater generated by water-using fixtures and appliances excluding water closets, urinals, bidets, kitchen sinks, and garbage disposals.”
- 媮 AZ: “wastewater collected separately from a sewage flow that originates from a clothes washer, bathtub, shower, and sink, but does not include wastewater from a kitchen sink, dishwasher, or toilet.”
- 媮 CT: “domestic sewage containing no fecal material or toilet waste.”

# Gray Water Statistics

媿 Avg amount of gray water produced per person per day is 40 gals

媿 50 to 80% of household wastewater is gray water

媿 Some gray water contains high levels of phosphate and sodium from the use of laundry detergents

媿 Levels of ammonia, nitrogen, and fecal coliform are generally higher in households with young children.

# Advantages and Disadvantages

媮 Lower potable/freshwater use

媮 Less strain on septic tank or treatment plant

媮 Highly effective purification

媮 Ability to build in areas unsuitable for conventional treatment

媮 Less energy and chemical use

媮 Groundwater recharge (instead of depletion)

媮 Plant growth

媮 Reclamation of otherwise wasted nutrients to support plant growth

媮 Lowers water bills

媮 If mishandled, can spread disease

媮 Becomes smelly and needs to be disinfected if stored more than 24 hours

媮 May effect movement of waste in sewer due to less water for transport

媮 Regulatory hassles in some jurisdictions

媮 Must use caution with household cleaners, thinners, solvents and drain openers, and avoid using cleaning and laundry materials that contain boron.

# Arizona

• New gray water laws in 2001

• Three-tiered approach

- Tier one applies to discharge of up to 400 gallons per day and does not require any special permission
- Tier two applies to discharge of reclaimed water, drywells, or mining water; and
- Tier three applies to discharge of up to 3,000 gallons per day, and requires special permission, and notice of intent to discharge.

# Model Ordinance

Additions Adds Appendix C of International Plumbing Code to the GA minimum standards.

Revisions Redefines gray water and special treatment gray water.

Revisions Allows discharge of gray water under certain specific conditions without a permit