

Quarterly News & Updates

April 15, 2026

Public Education (MCM1)

Public Participation/Involvement (MCM2)

Senate Bill 277



Working Together to Protect Our Water

Tim Kingsland

HSD Coordinator, Hobart Sanitary/Storm Water District

The City of Hobart is committed to keeping local waterways clean, and a big part of that effort relies on community participation. Under the city storm water program—specifically MCM 2, which focuses on Public Participation and Involvement—we encourage residents to take an active role in preventing pollution.

Some of the ways the City of Hobart supports this effort include:

- **Water Festival:** A fun annual event for families that teaches simple, practical ways to care for the environment.
- **Hazardous Waste Collection:** Once a year, the City partners with Lake County to give residents a safe place to drop off electronics and other hazardous items.
- **Monthly Newsletter:** Short educational messages about stormwater and pollution prevention, sent with the Hobart Sanitary District bills.
- **Green Infrastructure Projects:** The City installs environmentally friendly features—like rain gardens or native plantings and adds informative signs so people can learn how they work.
- **Storm Water System Inventory and Assessment Project:** This ongoing project reviews and maps all stormwater structures and invites residents to share information through online tools (GIS), public meetings, and mailed notices.
- **Encouraging the Community through Social Media:** Use of social media by the city, for example Facebook or Instagram, can assist homeowners, businesses, and organizations with current information through mobile devices.

Why Does Community Participation Matter for the City of Hobart? When residents understand how stormwater systems work, it becomes easier for everyone to do their part. Public involvement helps:

- Reduce confusion about storm water rules and regulatory compliance
- Improve cooperation between the City and residents
- Encourage voluntary, responsible behavior—such as using phosphorus-free lawn products, picking up pet

Annual Meeting

Have you registered for the annual meeting yet?

Early registration ends on April 17, and registration increases to \$275 on April 18. [Register Now!](#)

Stormwater World's IN MS4 Partnership Podcast

Want more Stormwater content in your life? Check out the Stormwater World [podcast!](#)

[Episode 047](#) features our Sponsorship Director Joe Moore and former Co-President Amanda Vandenoever discussing the IN MS4 Partnership.

MS4 Partnership Highlight

While the Southern Indiana Stormwater Advisory Committee ([SWAC](#)) makes a lot of their own posts, they also utilize pre-made flyers created by flyers created by the [One Water Indiana Initiative](#).

Check it out for ideas on how to improve your social media posts!

Sponsorships

We would not be where we are today without the generous

waste, and keeping water from downspouts off driveways and sidewalks

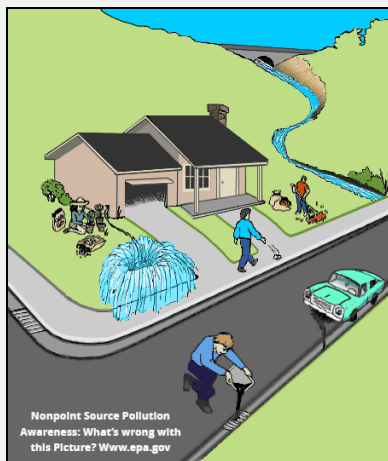
Local Knowledge Helps the City of Hobart become Stronger. No one knows Hobart better than the people who live here. Residents regularly help the City identify flooding areas, drainage problems, and possible pollution sources. This real-world insight helps the City strengthen its stormwater plan and respond more effectively to community concerns.

In summary, MCM 2 strengthens the City of Hobart's storm water program by involving the community at every step. Through open communication, educational efforts, and opportunities to participate, residents gain the knowledge they need to help protect our rivers, lakes, and neighborhoods. By allowing everyone a voice and encouraging shared responsibility helps create a cleaner, safer, and healthier Hobart for all.

Engaging Your Community

Sara Lamkin, CPESC, CESSWI

Project Manager - Stormwater, Indianapolis Department of Public Works - Engineering



As we head into the next permit term, there may be an increased emphasis on developing a stronger social media presence to help communities engage with stormwater messaging. You may be thinking, "how to I even start?" Great news – there are many resources out there to pull from!

EPA has outreach materials you can customize with your municipality's logo and have a post all ready to go! Just remember to credit or tag the source when using shared content. Something to consider, Facebook **Pages** allows you to post as your municipality and request engagement from your community. Facebook **Groups** have you post as yourself but can be great for sparking discussions among group members. EPA Materials Website can be found [here](#).

Looking for additional support? Sarah Wolf with Hendricks County Partnership for Water Quality runs a well-established Facebook Page with eye-catching and engaging posts that her community interacts with regularly! She also hosts a monthly Stormwater Educator Sharing Ideas meeting on the second Tuesday at 1:00pm. These sessions cover everything from social media and graphic design to classroom engagement and kids' activities. To join, contact her at SCWolf@co.hendricks.in.us. On a personal note, learning from her and participating in her sessions have made me more confident in speaking with and engaging with kids at our outreach events.

support of our sponsors.

Are you interested in being a sponsor? Find more information [here](#)!

Save the Date!

5/11/26 - IN MS4 Workshop
5/12/26 - IN MS4 Annual Meeting ([Register Now](#))

5/14/26-5/15/26 - NPDES Training Institute's MS4 Compliance & Enforcement Certified Inspector Training (MS4CECI) ([Register Now](#))

7/7/26-7/8/26 - Purdue LTAP Stormwater Drainage Conference and Tech Tours ([Register Now](#))

9/16/26-9/18/26 - INAFSM Conference ([Register Now](#))

Resources

[MS4 Home](#) | [Indiana](#) | [IN MS4 Partnership](#)

[IDEM: Stormwater Permitting: Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems \(MS4\)](#)

[US EPA: Stormwater Discharges from Municipal Sources](#)

Senate Bill 277 Becomes Law: What It Means for Indiana MS4 Programs

Ed Siewert

Stormwater/MS4 Coordinator, City of Jefferson

On March 5, 2026, Governor Mike Braun signed [Senate Bill 277](#) into law. Senate Bill 277 is a broad “environmental reform” law that significantly restructures how the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) carries out its work, with direct implications for MS4 programs across the state. The law amends numerous provisions in Title 13 by changing many IDEM obligations from mandatory (“shall”) to discretionary (“may”), and it reinforces a “no more stringent / no more burdensome than federal” approach to environmental rules and actions. Supporters describe this as streamlining, aligning Indiana with federal standards, and reducing regulatory burdens, while environmental and public-interest groups warn it will weaken IDEM’s ability to investigate pollution, enforce permits, and hold bad actors accountable. For MS4s, the federal NPDES framework and the existing MS4 General Permit remain in force. It is the perception that IDEM is being given more discretion and narrower authority.

For MS4 coordinators, the practical effect is less about the text of the MS4 permit changing and more about the legal framework around IDEM’s responsibilities. **MS4s remain required to meet all the existing minimum control measures—public education and involvement, IDDE, construction, post-construction, and good housekeeping—under the current MS4 General Permit and federal NPDES regulations.** At the same time, SB 277 alters the statutory language that governs when and how IDEM “shall” versus “may” act in carrying out its environmental protection duties, and it embeds additional limitations tied to federal baselines when state rules or actions could be considered “more stringent” or “more burdensome”.

The transition to this new framework will likely involve a period of “regulatory discovery” as IDEM determines how to exercise its new discretionary powers. MS4 leaders should not wait for issues to arise in isolation.

- 1. Document the Impact:** If the shift from “shall” to “may” leads to delays in permit assistance or clarity from the state, keep detailed records. Concrete data on how these changes affect local operations will be vital for future legislative testimony.
- 2. Engage with MS4 Groups:** Organizations like the MS4 Partnership and Indiana Association for Floodplain and Stormwater Management (INAFSM) will be more critical than ever. Use these forums to share how the “no more burdensome” standard is being interpreted on the ground.
- 3. Stay Proactive with IDEM:** While the agency’s obligations have changed, their mission to provide “environmental bang for the buck” remains. Proactive communication with your IDEM regional coordinators can help ensure that “discretionary” still means “supported.”

As we navigate this “streamlined” landscape, the goal remains the same: protecting Indiana’s water resources while managing the practical realities of municipal growth. SB 277 may have changed the rules of the game, but the commitment of Indiana’s MS4 coordinators to their communities remains constant.

