|  |
| --- |
| ***Governor Easley promised, if elected, that he would abolish the use of lagoons and sprayfields in NC in five years or less. This promise was completely broken. In fact, there is no evidence that he ever intended to keep it and only used it as a means touse it as a means to get elected. See his statement set forth below***. |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **EXCERPTS FROM GOVERNOR**  **MIKE EASLEY'S *COMPREHENSIVE* CLEAN WATER PLAN**  ***Introduction and Summary***  My comprehensive clean water plan starts with the obvious point that the anaerobic swine waste lagoon and spray field system has proved to be too risky. It must go. But abolishing open hog lagoons only starts the movement to high water quality. It will not achieve it. I believe the rest of my plan will.  ***Abolish Swine Waste Lagoons***  Some candidates for high office have finally expressed concern about the threat of swine waste lagoons, just as an important election approaches. Ironically, a series of laws enacted by many of the same politicians while in the General Assembly during the late 1980's and early 1990's paved the way for the rapid and virtually unregulated expansion of large-scale, industrial-style hog farming in North Carolina. The laws gave tax breaks to hog factory farms and severely restricted the ability of local communities, state regulators, and the courts to oversee their operations.  The Environmental Crimes Task Force, which I created in 1993, was forced to devote significant time and resources to the clean up of the environmental messes that followed. The unit, along with other prosecutors and investigators in the Attorney General's office, has played a key role in aggressively identifying, penalizing, and shutting down irresponsible hog operators who polluted our waters. In 1998, our office held that the state has the legal authority to prevent the slaughtering capacity at the Smithfield plant from being raised. And late last year, when swine operators and state regulators sought to get around state rules in order to spray more waste on already saturated fields, I refused to defend the maneuver in Superior Court. Thankfully, the limits on hog waste spraying remain in effect.  As Governor, I will lead a broad, consistent effort to address the environmental degradation caused by large-scale, factory hog farming. Certainly, the companies that own and profit from the hog industry must bear their fair share of legal liability when the people they hire break our water quality laws. Those who enjoy direct financial benefits from hog production must have an economic incentive to promote compliance with state environmental rules. Therefore, my Administration will make sure that major hog companies, and other "integrators" of small farmers into large-scale hog operations, share liability for water quality violations at their contract farms.  Moreover, a lagoon phase-out, starting with those abandoned and in flood plains or other at-risk locations, is also critical. Hog lagoons have spilled into our waterways too often, and the issue of damage from atmospheric nitrogen and ammonia falling as rain is too serious to continue with "business-as-usual."  As a result, the phase out of hog waste lagoons must begin immediately, and be subject to a strict timetable. Demanding compliance with this timetable will force the development of new, environmentally-friendly technologies to control hog waste. As such technologies develop, the timetable can be accelerated. But mandatory deadlines are necessary to continue the pace of research and development, and to force implementation. Specifically, as Governor, I will insist on the following timetable:  (1) Large scale, on-farm installation of testing and new technologies, at the expense of integrators, to begin immediately;  (2) Testing, evaluation, and oversight of new waste facilities, by independent scientists, beginning in year one;  (3) Full scale installation of the technologies found most effective, no later than years three and four; and  (4) Completion of phase out and total elimination of the lagoon system no later than year five, and substantially sooner if the independent scientists determine that faster implementation is possible.  Whether by the initiative of the elected branches or by court order, the outmoded lagoon system will be replaced. The real question is what will take its place. Converting to cleaner, safer waste technologies will come at a price. We must be sensitive to independent family farms, so many of which have attempted to operate responsibly. These farmers simply played by the rules set by the General Assembly. Still, they must convert and, as Governor, I will see that they do so.  While the conversion is underway, large-scale farms must make operational improvements, including buffers, biocovers, and windbreak walls, to minimize dangers to our waters, as well as our air.  The necessity of moving away from the swine waste lagoon and spray field system is obvious. But anyone who suggests that just getting rid of hog lagoons is enough to guarantee high water quality does not understand, or is not admitting, the full extent of the challenge ahead. We must get beyond lagoons and have a comprehensive response to the real issue of overall water quality.  Ultimately, if the state does not move vigorously against all sources of water pollution, the Environmental Protection Agency has made clear that it will act. If North Carolina does its job, federal intervention will be unnecessary. At the same time, North Carolina deserves more federal funding grants (under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act) to assist in carrying out basin wide programs. I will fight for increased federal funding as Governor.  In sum, comprehensive clean up and protection action plans must be implemented and obeyed in order to improve water quality. As Governor, I will insist on such plans and I will enforce them. | |  |  | | --- | |  | |