



Not in *OUR* DC!

Pledge to Keep the Capital Clean

Discussion/Self-Reflection Questions

Vignette VII — Cost of Litter

1. The documentary opens with the following statistic: Cleaning up trash off DC streets and waterways costs the city \$20 million a year. What else could that money buy to improve the city?
2. Quentin Henderson, a street sweeper operator, tells us, "On a heavy day I may cover approximately 25 to 30 miles... and pick up in total a ton and a half to two tons of trash." Let's think about things that weigh two tons and picture how big they are—maybe elephants. Where would you put something that big? Would you leave it in the street? Do people stop to consider how trash piles up into something so heavy? Do you think people would stop littering if they thought about how much trash they create?
3. Wilbur Parker, foreman of Sewer Services, Water and Sewer Authority, tells us about some of the things he skims off the rivers in DC: "Sofas, refrigerators, fire extinguishers, tires, coolers—that list just goes on and on" and how they get there: "by people just simply throwing stuff in the streets, off of bridges... we sometimes find bags of trash where people will come by with their car and just throw a bag of trash off the bridge into the river." Have you witnessed anything like this? Why do people do this?
4. Jeffery Gamble from the DC Water and Sewer Authority says he feels responsible and proud of his job: "I'm a District resident, so I have a vested stake in what I do. I have a kid and I want her to be able to drink clean water and live in a clean city when she grows up." How do we help people think about their actions in terms of keeping their own city clean for today and for the future? How do you help people feel they have a "vested stake" in their actions?
5. If people know the financial impact of their actions, are they are more likely to change their habits? Why or why not?