



NORTH CAROLINA
Environmental Quality

ROY COOPER
Governor

ELIZABETH S. BISER
Secretary

**Secretaries' Science Advisory Board
MEETING MINUTES
Morrow Mountain, Green Square Building
Wednesday, October 4, 2023
10:00 AM-2:00 PM**

The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Secretaries' Science Advisory Board (SAB) met on Wednesday October 4, 2023, in person in the Morrow Mountain Conference Room in the DEQ Green Square Building in a public meeting, and in the virtual setting. SAB members in attendance were Tom Augspurger, PhD, Chairperson; Betsey Tilson MD, MPH; Jamie DeWitt, PhD; Richard Di Giulio, PhD; Gina Kimble, PhD; John Vandenberg, PhD; David Howard, MPH; Elaina Kenyon, PhD; Detlef Knappe, PhD; and Tom Starr, PhD. The DEQ staff in attendance were Sushma Masemore, P.E., Frannie Nilsen, PhD; Jared Wilson, MSc; Michael Scott; Mike Abraczinskas, Taylor Hartsfield, Richard Rogers, Amy Delinsky, Peter Johnston, Gary Saunders; Rebecca Sadosky, PhD. The DHHS staff in attendance were Virginia Guidry, PhD, MPH.

I. Call to Order – 10:00 am

Meeting called to order at 10:02 AM by Chairperson ("Chair") Augspurger.

II. Review and Approve Agenda ([meeting recording](#) timestamp 00:04:13)

Chair Augspurger asked for a motion and second to accept the agenda. The agenda was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

[October 4 Agenda](#)

III. Ethics Statement ([meeting recording](#) timestamp 00:07:10)

Chair Augspurger read the ethics statement and reminded the members that if anyone had any conflict of interest, or issues for which a conflict may be perceived, to indicate so. No conflicts were noted by those in attendance.

IV. Approval of Meeting Minutes for August 2, 2023 ([meeting recording](#) timestamp 00:09:25)

The draft meeting minutes were circulated to all members; the August minutes were adopted unanimously by roll call vote.

[August 2023 Meeting Minutes](#)

V. DEQ / DHHS updates

DEQ Updates ([meeting recording](#) timestamp 00:12:16)

Provided by Sushma Masemore, P.E., Assistant Secretary for the Environment, NC DEQ.

1- PFAS Action Strategy Update:

- a. The Action Strategy is a whole DEQ approach to protect communities, protecting drinking water and cleaning up existing contamination.
- b. Protecting Communities- ongoing sampling and testing in prep for the EPA drinking water regulation expected at the end of the year. The Public Water System group will give a more detailed update during their presentation later today.
 - i. Federal funding for Emerging Contaminants in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)- funding is managed by the Division of Water Infrastructure (DWI), released a plan and communication for accessing these funds. Funds available and anticipating applications to roll in starting this month.
 - ii. In Aug 2023 Meeting the DWM pilot program in Bernard Allen DW fund was highlighted. This fund has begun to be utilized by DEQ to test private wells for PFAS contamination and provides treatment for PFAS concentrations that meet or exceed Health Advisory Levels beyond those for which a responsible party is known. These are wells where the Chemours Consent Order PFAS are not triggering that support.
 1. 9 applications received so far; continuing to spread the word and inform the residents of this option for water testing and treatment.
 - iii. In the coming months, the DWM & the DWR will bring forth the next steps in PFAS standards development work for surface water and groundwater for those PFAS where there are appropriate health and environmental data.
 - iv. Acknowledge the Aug 24 letter from CFPWA from Executive Director Waldrup. DEQ has reviewed and understand the request in the letter and has met with leadership and staff on multiple occasions and designed today's agenda to support this ask. This is an ongoing complimentary activity to incorporate into monitoring and to incorporate into standards work if possible. Main goal today is to establish the background knowledge required to further address this issue.

2- Climate Pollution Reduction Program Update- funding received from EPA as part of the Inflation Reduction Act. Staff will be providing updates in the coming weeks.

- a. [NC Climate Pollution Reduction Planning Grant Summary Presentation](#)
- b. [Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Website and Information Session Schedule](#)

DHHS Updates ([meeting recording](#) timestamp 00:20:45)

Provided by Virginia Guidry PhD, MPH, Branch Head, Occupational & Environmental Epidemiology, NCDHHS

- 1- Respiratory Virus Season Update- COVID decreasing but expect an increase into fall and winter. There is a reformulated COVID vaccine and flu vaccine now available at local providers.
- 2- Wastewater surveillance data is helping to track respiratory viruses (COVID, flu and RSV), expanding capacity at state lab for surveillance and genetic sequencing to identify variants. NC Wastewater Monitoring Network (updated each Wednesday): [Wastewater Monitoring | NC DHHS COVID-19](#)
- 3- Climate Strategy Report just submitted in response to exec order 80. Recently awarded funding to WNC Health Alliance to promote the addition of climate justice and environmental justice in community health assessments. The link to the Climate Strategy Reports from each cabinet agency is here: <https://www.deq.nc.gov/energy-climate/climate-change/nc-climate-change-interagency-council/climate-strategy-reports>
- 4- Fish Consumption Advisories Update- Continuing outreach and information sharing; staff will attend a Fish Advisory Meeting hosted by academic partners on Oct 25.

Informational Items:

VI. PFPrA Informational Presentations ([meeting recording](#) timestamp 00:25:40)

- i. **Overview of Cape Fear Public Utilities PFAS Water Treatment Operation and Request for Assistance** – presented by Ken Waldroup, CFPUA Executive Director.

[CFPUA Presentation](#)

- ii. **Overview of the PFPrA Human Health Toxicity Value** – presented by EPA authors: Lucina Lizarraga, PhD and Beth Owens, PhD; U.S. EPA, Office of Research and Development.

[EPA ORD PFPrA Human Health Toxicity Value Assessment](#)

[EPA ORD Presentation](#)

- iii. **PFPrA in NC** - DEQ staff will present information regarding the prevalence of PFPrA in NC, current analytical capabilities, and possible sources.

[DEQ DWM Presentation](#)

VII. Break – 12-1pm.

VIII. DWR Update: 2023 PFAS Sampling of NC Public Water Systems – DWR staff will present DEQ's Public Water System sampling effort, and EPA's UCMR5 initiative related to NC.

[DEQ DWR Update Presentation](#)

IX. Public Forum ([meeting recording](#) timestamp 02:12:17)

Several community members offered public comment, they can be heard in the meeting recording.

X. Adjourn – 1:40 pm

The next NCSSAB meeting will be held on Wednesday December 6, 2023.