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### **NEWS RELEASE: Environmental Panel Makes Recommendation on Proposed Interbasin Water Transfer**

**RALEIGH** – Three members of a state environmental panel acting as hearing officers for the interbasin transfer request by Concord and Kannapolis have issued a recommendation to the Environmental Management Commission. The hearing officers recommend that the two cities be allowed to withdraw significantly less water than the cities requested from the Catawba basin. The hearing officers also recommended that a number of protective conditions be placed on the water transfer.

The request by Concord and Kannapolis was for up to 36 million gallons of water a day -- 26 million gallons per day from the Catawba River basin and 10 million gallons per day from the Yadkin River basin. The hearing officers recommend that Concord and Kannapolis be allowed to withdraw a maximum of 10 million gallons of water a day from each river basin. This recommendation is a significant decrease from the amount requested for withdrawal from the Catawba River basin. Concord and Kannapolis are seeking the transfer to address their projected water supply shortfall during the next 30 years. The hearing officers found that the reduced transfer will be sufficient to meet the cities' needs during that period.

The hearing officers' recommendation was mailed on Monday to members of the full 19-person commission, who will consider the water transfer proposal at a January meeting. That meeting, originally set for Jan. 11, is now scheduled for 2 p.m. Jan. 10. The meeting will be in the ground floor hearing room at the Archdale Building in Raleigh.

The hearing officers' recommendation is based on the findings in the final environmental impact statement, numerous public comments and the hearing officer's independent assessment of the impacts of the interbasin transfer.

During the public comment period, people living in the river basins expressed concerns that the water transfer could lower lake levels and harm recreation and economic development. Extensive modeling shows that under normal conditions, the recommended withdrawals of 10 million gallons per day from each river basin would have no measurable impact. Under record drought conditions, modeling indicates that lake levels would drop by only a few inches.

The hearing officers' recommendation also places conditions on the water transfer to the two cities. Under the recommendation, Concord and Kannapolis would be required to follow all water-use restrictions placed on communities in the two river basins during periods of drought. The recommendation also states that the interbasin transfer certificate could change based on the conditions placed on three energy companies that are seeking to renew federal licenses in the river basins.

For a copy of Monday's recommendation, see [www.ncwater.org](http://www.ncwater.org). For more information, contact Jamie Kritzer, public information officer with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, at (919) 715-7357.

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