

# Secretaries' Science Advisory Board

## MEETING MINUTES - Draft

### Webex Event Virtual Meeting

Monday, April 5, 2021

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 Monday, April 5, 2021 by Webex Event as a virtual public meeting. SAB members in attendance were: Tom Augspurger, PhD (Chair); Jamie DeWitt, PhD; Rich Di Giulio, PhD; Elaina Kenyon, PhD; Gina Kimble, PhD; Detlef Knappe, PhD; Thomas Starr, PhD; Michael Stoskopf, DVM, PhD; Betsey Tilson, MD, MPH; and John Vandenberg, PhD. Also, in attendance were DEQ Secretary Dionne Delli-Gatti; Sushma Masemore; Frannie Nilsen, PhD; Michael Pjetraj; Mike Abraczinskas; Brian Wrenn; Michael Scott; Danny Smith; Julie Grzyb; Zack Moore, MD; Virginia Guidry, PhD; and DEQ and DHHS support staff: Dylan Friedenber; Ellen Lorscheider; Sharon Martin; Bridget Shelton; Beth Dittman; Amy Risen, PhD; Toby Vinson; Joelle Burleson; Peter Johnston; Mercedes Hernández; and Louise Hughes.

#### I. Call to Order (Chairman Tom Augspurger)

Meeting called to order at 10:04 AM.

#### II. Review and Approve Agenda

Chairman Augspurger noted the modifications to the meeting agenda sent today. Dr. Jamie DeWitt moved to accept the agenda as proposed, Dr. John Vandenberg seconded, and the agenda was approved by unanimous rollcall vote.



#### III. Ethics Statement

Chairman 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. Dr. DeWitt explained that she is currently working on research on PFAS, receives funding from the NC General Assembly and the federal government for said research, and serves as an expert witness in cases involving PFAS. There were no other potential conflicts expressed.

#### IV. Approval of Meeting Minutes for February 1, 2021

The draft meeting minutes were circulated to all members for review on March 23, 2021. Chairman Augspurger stated there were redline/strikeout corrections to be approved. Dr. Elaina Kenyon moved to approve the minutes as amended; Dr. Gina Kimble seconded, and the amended February minutes were adopted unanimously by rollcall vote.



## V. DEQ and DHHS updates

Chairman Augspurger asked for the DEQ update, noting the recent changes in leadership at DEQ: a new Secretary, Dionne Delli-Gatti, Sheila Holman retiring on May 1, and Sushma Masemore named Acting Assistant Secretary. Secretary Delli-Gatti thanked the Board and said she appreciated the work the Board has done on PFAS and other emerging compounds. She is looking forward to working with the Board and continuing its important work.

### DEQ Update:

*Provided by Sushma Masemore, Mike Abraczinskas (Director, Division of Air Quality), and Michael Scott (Director, Division of Waste Management) of DEQ*

- Mrs. Masemore provided her background for the benefit of the Board: She is a chemical engineer and worked as a section chief for the Division of Air Quality before becoming Deputy Assistant Secretary and State Energy Director. She has two points to emphasize:
  - DEQ is in receipt and appreciative of the excellent work the Board has done on hexavalent chromium; and will provide feedback.
  - Encouraged the board to consider the unique characteristics of the state, not necessarily duplicate national approaches, but charting a path forward that addresses the unique challenges of the state and its people.
- PFAS: Mr. Mike Abraczinskas reported that evaluation of data submitted by Chemours shows they are in compliance with the Consent Order regarding the 99% reduction in emissions facility-wide; continue to see lower air deposition values for the year 2020 and 2021 than what they saw in previous years; continuing work with UNC Collaboratory on air emissions and methods for air quality monitoring.
- Mr. Michael Scott reported on the meetings with Chemours regarding the On- and Off-Site Assessment which is critical for the appropriate evaluation of the Corrective Action Plan. They are also actively working with the Colonial Pipeline and the release of 1.2 million gallons of petroleum outside of Huntersville, NC. Initial data shows some detections of PFAS possibly associated with remedial actions.

### DHHS Update:

*Provided by Dr. Zack Moore (State Epidemiologist; Epidemiology Section Chief, Division of Public Health, DHHS)*

- COVID-19 status: There have been big improvements in key metrics since the holiday peak in January and since the last time the board met.
  - There are concerns with emergence of new variants that are more transmissible; trying to quickly vaccinate to avoid a surge of the new variants.

- Vaccination opening to all NC citizens 16 years and older on Wednesday, April 7, 2021. More than 25% of the state's population have been vaccinated completely. Last Thursday there were more than 100,000 doses administered.
- Staff are working on vaccination planning at occupational settings and getting the wastewater COVID-19 surveillance system up and running. The data is shared with local health departments and partners to inform the pandemic response; expanding surveillance sites and developing a dashboard to provide access to the data.
- PFAS: Continuing to develop a general health presentation that could be provided to community groups in person or virtually; continuing work with PFAST Network.
- TCE vapor intrusion guidance: worked with DEQ's staff to implement the guidance; work has taken place at two sites to provide outreach and response.
- Well water survey: Interim results have been finalized and submitted to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
- The new CDC grant to build resiliency and environmental health capacity has allowed them to add staff to accomplish the goals of the grant.
- Climate and Health: Continue to work with the UNC Institute for the Environment to develop a call-to-action to mitigate the effects of climate change on young children.

#### Board Updates:

*Provided by Chairman Augspurger.*

- Dr. Dorman is chairing a seminar by the National Academy of Science, Engineering and Medicine on Indoor Air Quality and its intersection with climate which might be an interesting topic for the board to explore.
- Phillip Tarte is no longer a member, and he received a letter of thanks for his Board service. Mr. Davin Madden, Lincoln County Health Director, has been appointed to the Board by DEQ and DHHS.
- Dr. Vandenberg has retired from EPA and requested and received permission to continue to serve on the Board as a private citizen.
- Board members should periodically review their bio information posted on the DEQ website for accuracy and update as needed.

#### VI. **PFAS Presentation #1 – “Developmental toxicity of emerging PFAS in NC in the Sprague-Dawley rat”** by Justin Conley, PhD (Reproductive Systems Biologist, Public Health and Integrated Toxicology Division, Center for Public Health and Environmental Assessment, Office of Research and Development, U.S. EPA)

*Dr. Conley's presentation is not available for download, but the recent publications included in his presentation are linked below.*

- [Adverse Maternal, Fetal, and Postnatal Effects of Hexafluoropropylene Oxide Dimer Acid \(GenX\) from Oral Gestational Exposure in Sprague-Dawley Rats](#)

- [Hexafluoropropylene oxide-dimer acid \(HFPO-DA or GenX\) alters maternal and fetal glucose and lipid metabolism and produces neonatal mortality, low birthweight, and hepatomegaly in the Sprague-Dawley rat](#)

**The Board will break from 11:30 AM to 12:30 PM.**

**VII. PFAS Presentation #2 – “Overview of the approach to considering six PFAS based on similar modes of action and relative potency to derive a guideline for the subgroup”** by Sandra Baird, PhD (Toxicologist and Risk Analyst, Office of Research and Standards, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection)

*Dr Baird’s presentation is linked below.*



### **VIII. Public Forum**

Mr. Risotto, Senior Director of the American Chemistry Council (ACC), said the Council is looking forward to reviewing the results of EPA’s 150 PFAS review. The Council is concerned by arbitrary grouping; there are no data available for two (2) substances, PFDA and PFHxA. An open discussion took place. Chairman Augspurgen thanked Mr. Risotto for his comments and the Board members for their comments, and that feedback is helpful.

With no further business, Chairman Augspurgen invited a motion to adjourn. Dr. Knappe moved to adjourn; Dr. Kimble seconded. All voted in favor.

The next meeting is scheduled for June 7, 2021; it will be a virtual meeting.

**The meeting adjourned at 1:35 pm.**

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Louise G. Hughes*

*Assistant to Sheila Holman, Assistant Secretary for the Environment, DEQ and Sushma Masemore,  
Acting Assistant Secretary for the Environment, DEQ*