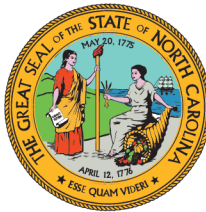


JOSH STEIN
Governor

D. REID WILSON
Secretary

SUSHMA MASEMORE
Deputy Secretary for Environment



NORTH CAROLINA
Environmental Quality

Secretaries' Science Advisory Board

Secretaries' Science Advisory Board MEETING MINUTES Ground Floor Hearing Room, Archdale Building Wednesday, April 2, 2025 10:00 am

The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Secretaries' Science Advisory Board (SAB) met on Wednesday, April 2, 2025, in person in the Ground Floor Hearing Room on the Archdale Building in a public meeting. SAB members in attendance were Chairperson Tom Augspurger, PhD; Gina Kimble, PhD; Elaina Kenyon, PhD, DABT; John Vandenberg, PhD, Jamie DeWitt, PhD; Rich DiGulio, PhD; DEQ Staff in attendance were D. Reid Wilson; Sushma Masemore PE; Richard Rogers; Frannie Nilsen, PhD; Jared Wilson, MS, Peter Johnston. DHHS staff in attendance were Zack Moore, MD MPH.

I. Call to Order

Chairperson Augspurger called the meeting to order at 10:14 am.

II. Review and Approve Agenda

Agenda was approved unanimously at 10:18 am.

III. Ethics Statement

Read by Chairperson Augspurger at 10:19 am.

IV. Approval of Meeting Minutes for December 6, 2024

The minutes from the December 2024 meeting were approved unanimously with minor revisions to the attendee list at 10:24 am.

V. DEQ / DHHS updates

I. DHHS Updates (meeting recording at [00:10:50](#)).

*Provided by Zack Moore MD MPH, State Epidemiologist and Epidemiology Section Chief,
Division of Public Health, NC DHHS*

- On March 25, DHHS was informed of a rescission of federal funds previously allocated for state COVID supplemental programs. Budgetary cuts have resulted in 80 lost staff, not including contract employees. There has been no direct impact on the Occupational and Environmental Epidemiology Branch, but other DHHS operations have been implicated.
 - Impacts of staff terminations and program defunding (including CDC and Center for EHS) are unclear. DHHS continues to operate the Environmental Health Dashboard.
 - DHHS has expanded heat health alert systems to all 100 counties.
- DHHS continues to work with DEQ for PFAS response efforts, and a report has been sent to the



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legislature pertaining to fluoride levels in drinking water.

- North Carolina has seen a severe flu season and is on track to report 500 flu deaths this year, which is even more than in the 2009 H1N1 pandemic. DHHS is tracking and preparing for the possibility of measles introduction given the expansion of an outbreak in west Texas (and other states) along with the continued increase of measles importations from unvaccinated travelers. DHHS is working with state clinicians and health departments to prepare for a related measles response in the case of a cluster in North Carolina.
- Dr. Guidry continues to support the Governor's EJ Council, which had their first meeting of the year last week, as Co-chair.

II. DEQ updates (Sushma Masemore) (meeting recording at [00:22:48](#)).

Provided by Sushma Masemore PE, Deputy Secretary for Environment, NC DEQ

- Hurricane Helene.
 - a. Six months ago, Hurricane Helene hit Western NC, and impacts are still being seen today. DEQ has worked to ensure post-disaster safety, planning, rescue, environmental issue resolution, and other emergency responses. Drinking water and wastewater systems affected by Helene are now mostly operational, but many are still in the infrastructure rebuilding phase. DEQ is providing emergency bridge loans authorized by the legislature to give local municipalities resources to make progress in managing post-disaster recovery. Congressional appropriations have been received, and DEQ is working with EPA to determine mechanisms to disperse the monetary assistance to local governments. DEQ is working with other agencies and local entities to manage debris collection. This necessitates some degree of debris incineration, which poses a concern for air quality impacts and wildfires. Local agencies are exerting efforts to understand the scope of this issue, and DAQ is providing monitoring assistance.
 - b. EPA is reconsidering and reviewing major federal regulatory actions across air, water, and drinking water programs, including those pertaining to hazardous waste and discharge. DEQ is currently unsure of the order in which regulatory actions will materialize but will respond accordingly when new information is learned.
- Emerging Contaminants.
 - a. 1,4- Dioxane measurements are being presented to EMC. There have been high detected levels from Asheboro wastewater system discharges, and downstream drinking water systems programs have been notified and are monitoring for potential impacts. These have been some of the highest levels the state has seen. DEQ is working with EMC for potential regulatory pathways to reduce contamination, which will be discussed in May with the Water Quality Committee.
 - b. PFAS - EPA promulgated MCLs last year, and all states are required to adopt those standards, which DEQ has already started to ensure compliance. DEQ is working to formulate rules and comments to bring to the proximate meeting with the Public Health Commission.
 - i. Groundwater Standards, which are used when there is a source contamination affecting groundwater wells, provide a mechanism for cleanup levels and inform homeowners with private wells to determine safe levels for filtration decisions. PFAS IMACs have been in place for a year. EMC has requested PFAS rulemaking for 3 compounds (PFOS, PFOA, GenX). The hearing officer's report will be presented in July to the EMC Groundwater Committee.



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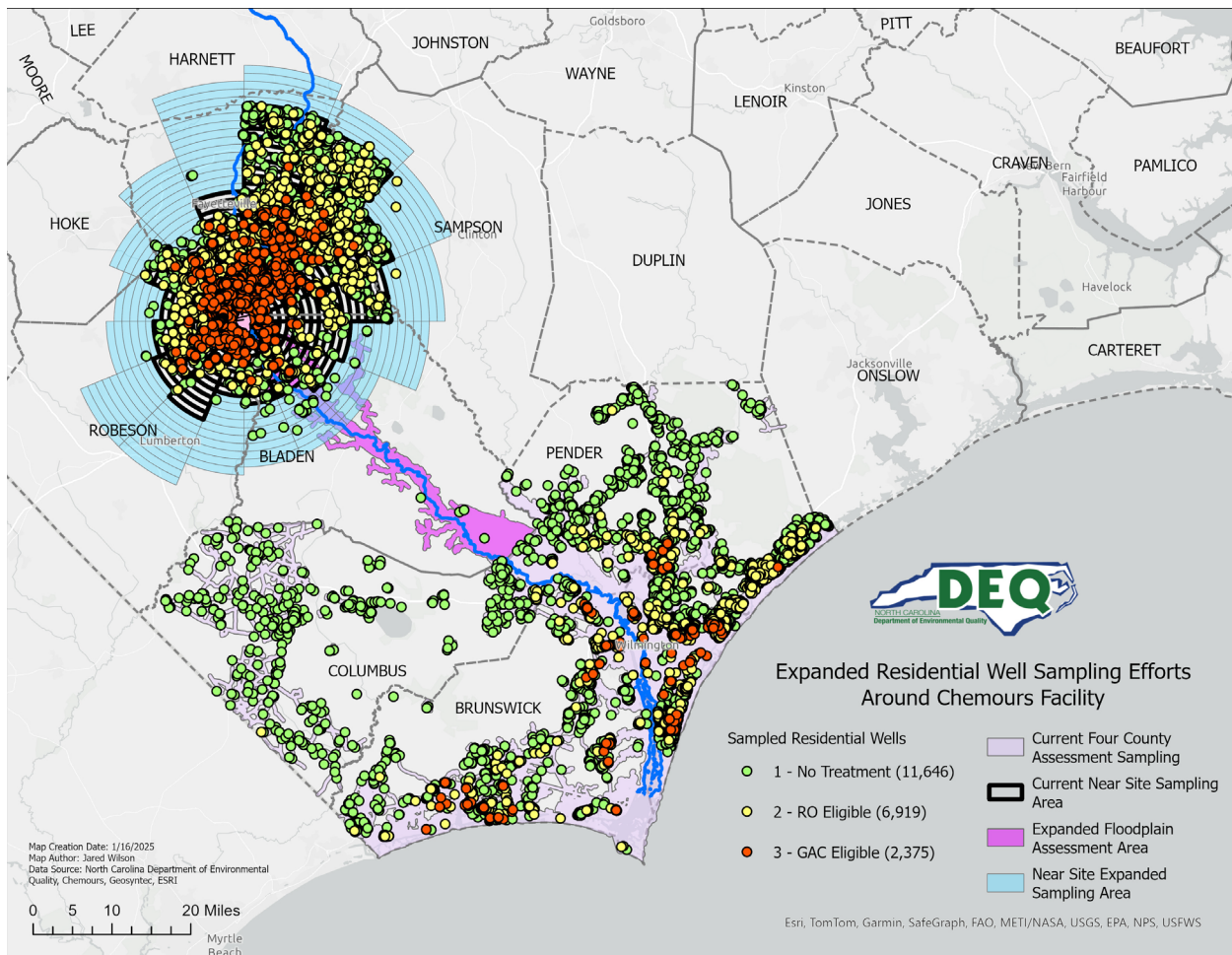
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ii. Surface Water Standard Rulemaking affects industrial and uncontrolled sources of discharge. DEQ has been instructed by EMC to review source reduction methods, particularly by looking at Significant Industrial Users and direct dischargers. DEQ aims to minimize pollution discharge, and these rules will be presented in May before discussion with the full commission.

- Chemours-related Contamination and Cleanup.

- a. A GIS map (below) depicting discharge from the Chemours facility was presented. DEQ is evaluating the extent of the contamination near the Chemours facility and the compounding impacts throughout the region. Residents in impacted regions have been notified if they are eligible for testing and filtration methods. 10,000 additional homes could be eligible for testing. Cape Fear-proximate counties are included in this scope. Chemours has been instructed to evaluate the impacts of their pollution contamination, and assessment is under review by DEQ. Delineation of additional areas and eligible homeowners will be determined in the coming months.



Action Item:

VI. 1,4-Dioxane HHRA Report Review Request (*meeting recording at [00:55:03](#)*).

The Board discussed DEQ's request from the December 2024 meeting to provide a review of the completed HHRA report that was completed in accordance with Session Law 2023-137: 9(a) and provide formal feedback regarding whether the approach and findings of the report are scientifically reasonable. The Board systematically reviewed the methodologies and findings of the report and their alignment with the principles of scientific reasonability. The Board considered the overall approach, exposure assessment, effects assessment, risk characterization, validity, and conclusions. A synthesis will be produced, and the Board will continue to review this report in subsequent meetings.

[1,4-Dioxane Charge Presentation](#)

Informational Items:

VII. DEQ Secretary D. Reid Wilson (*meeting recording at [01:44:56](#)*).

The DEQ Secretary addressed the Science Advisory Board, expressing gratitude for SAB and DEQ colleagues and their contributions. He described his background and term priorities, emphasizing science-based decision-making in the best interests of North Carolinians in efforts to prioritize the protection of clean air, water, public health, and the environment.

VIII. PFMOAA Toxicity Review Update (*meeting recording at [1:59:09](#)*).

Dr. Frannie Nilsen led a recurring follow-up discussion of PFMOAA peer-reviewed publications and the 2022 recommendation the Board made for PFMOAA to DEQ. Currently, DEQ plans to await EPA's final toxicity assessment before further review and recommendation.

[PFMOAA Recommendation Follow-up Presentation](#)

IX. Chemours Consent Order toxicity study status update (*meeting recording at [02:10:00](#)*).

Dr. Frannie Nilsen presented updated information regarding the Consent Order toxicity studies. All protocols were reviewed and approved by DEQ after thorough review.

[Consent Order Toxicity Study Updates Presentation](#)

X. Public Forum (*meeting recording at [02:43:25](#)*).

There were no members of the public signed up to speak at the meeting. Board members discussed ways to improve communication with the public regarding salient PFAS contamination issues.

XI. Adjourn

Chairperson Augspurger adjourned the meeting at 2:12 pm (*timestamp [03:03:34](#)*). The next meeting will occur on August 6, 2025, in the Archdale Building Ground Floor Hearing Room.

