

Secretaries' Science Advisory Board

MEETING MINUTES

Webex Event Virtual Meeting

Monday, December 6, 2021

10:00 AM-2:15 PM

The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Secretaries' Science Advisory Board (SAB) met on Monday, December 6, 2021, by Webex Event as a virtual public meeting. SAB members in attendance were Tom Augspurger, PhD (Chair); Viney Aneja, PhD; Jamie DeWitt, PhD; Rich Di Giulio, PhD; Elaina Kenyon, PhD; Gina Kimble, PhD; Detlef Knappe, PhD; Davin Madden; Thomas Starr, PhD; Betsey Tilson, MD, MPH; and John Vandenberg, PhD. Also, in attendance were DEQ and DHHS staff: DEQ Assistant Secretary Sushma Masemore; Frannie Nilsen, PhD; Zack Moore, MD; Virginia Guidry, MD; Mike Abraczinskas; Michael Pjetraj; Brian Wrenn; Michael Scott; Danny Smith; Julie Grzyb; Sharon Martin; Bridget Shelton; Steve Rice and Louise Hughes.

I. Call to Order (Chairman Tom Augspurger)

Meeting called to order at 10:03 AM. Chairman Augspurger noted that Drs. Stoskopf and Dorman both had prior commitments, and they are not attending today's meeting. He said that he would turn the chair over to Dr. Tilson for the remainder of the meeting after 11:15 AM, as he has another commitment. Dr. DiGiulio also has another obligation and will leave the meeting at the break.

II. Review and Approve Agenda

Chairman Augspurger asked if there were any changes to the agenda; being none, he asked for a motion and second to accept the agenda as posted. Dr. DeWitt moved to accept the agenda as modified, Dr. Vandenberg seconded, and the agenda was approved by unanimous rollcall vote.

[December 6, 2021, Agenda](#)

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. Dr. Knappe also explained his research on PFAS.

IV. Approval of Meeting Minutes for October 2, 2021

The draft meeting minutes were circulated to all members for review November 30, 2021. The October minutes were adopted unanimously by rollcall vote.

V. DEQ and DHHS updates

DEQ Update:

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

Mrs. Masemore deferred to after DHHS provided their updates, at the formal presentation in the next agenda item.

DHHS Update:

Provided by Dr. Zack Moore, State Epidemiologist, DHHS

1. COVID updates: NC has seen decreases in most metrics over the last three weeks; highest rates among children, Delta variant; Omicron variant not identified in NC at this time. Encouraged by high effectiveness of vaccines, protection due to vaccination and recovery from past infections. Ages 18 and over to receive booster, vaccines widely available, as well as treatment for prevention. Wastewater monitoring on 19 sites around the state.
2. PFAS and other issues:
 - a. 1,4-Dioxane in Haw River; Pittsboro – under investigation.
 - b. GenX toxicity assessment fact sheet to be published.
 - c. Environmental Health Dashboard to come online soon.
 - d. Fact sheet for water testing in development; will forward to Board when finalized.
 - e. Personnel changes; working to fill vacancies in Health Assessment, Consultation & Education (HACE) program.
3. Climate and health efforts: DHHS awarded grants for support for the Building Resilience Against Climate Effects (BRACE) program.

VI. EPA PFAS Roadmap and NC Activities

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

[DEQ Presentation #1](#)

Dr. DeWitt asked regarding the testing strategy released by EPA, what DEQ's thoughts are on the definition. Mrs. Masemore replied that testing is based on the federal framework, such as the Clean Water Act and other federal requirements, and DEQ is working with the data in hand, examining the discharges and current permits, evaluating additional sources of PFAS, and that more data is needed.

VII. PFOS/PFOA Recommendations Summary

Provided by Frannie Nilsen, PhD, Environmental Toxicologist, DEQ.

[DEQ Presentation #2](#)

Dr. DeWitt asked for a brief explanation of the difference between standards applied to groundwater, surface water and drinking water. DEQ leadership from the Division of Waste Management and the Division of Water Resources and the DWR Standards group responded in detail to this question. Briefly, they explained that the groundwater 2L rules protect groundwater

as sources of drinking water; they are protective of human health along federal guidelines. The surface water 2B rules classify the uses (drinking, recreation, aquatic life), and are established by the Clean Water Act. A Practical Quantitation Limit (PQL) is the lowest level detectable by a laboratory, which varies from lab to lab, but can be used to establish a groundwater IMAC, or temporary groundwater standard.

VIII. EPA GenX Toxicity Assessment and Next Steps

Provided by Dr. Sue Euling, Ryan Albert, Brittany Jacobs, and Dr. Elizabeth Behl, EPA.

Presentation is not available for download and can be viewed in the [meeting recording](#) (2:58).

The Board members thanked the EPA representatives for their presentation, which included as much of the 2021 data as has been published. The EPA representatives responded to questions regarding ongoing PFAS examination and toxicity assessments.

IX. Public Forum

Eighteen (18) people signed up to speak; only eight (8) were on the call to speak:

1. Sue Fenton, NIH
2. Steve Risotto, American Chemistry Council
3. Dana Sargent, Cape Fear River Watch
4. Jean Zhuang, Southern Environmental Law Center
5. Emily Donovan
6. Mike Watters
7. Beth Markasino
8. Emily Sutton, Haw Riverkeeper

Dr. Tilson thanked the members of the public for the robust public comment, and the attendance at the meeting. Dr. Nilsen offered her contact information so any members of the public who had additional questions or concerns could contact her directly for further information.

X. Adjourn

Dr. Tilson entertained a motion to adjourn; Mr. Madden moved, Dr. Vandenberg seconded, and with the agreement of the Board, and with no further business, Dr. Tilson adjourned the meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for February 7, 2022; details of meeting logistics to be announced.

The meeting adjourned at 2:14 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Louise G. Hughes

Assistant to Sushma Masemore, Assistant Secretary for the Environment, DEQ