

Secretaries' Science Advisory Board

MEETING MINUTES

Webex Event Virtual Meeting

Monday, February 7, 2022

10:00 AM-1:48 PM

The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Secretaries' Science Advisory Board (SAB) met on Monday, February 7, 2022, 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; Thomas Starr, PhD; Michael Stoskopf, 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; Chris Ventaloro, Dylan Friedenberg and Louise Hughes.

I. Call to Order (Chairman Tom Augspurger)

Meeting called to order at 10:03 AM. Chairman Augspurger noted that Drs. Dorman and Starr and Mr. Madden all had prior commitments, and they are not attending today's meeting. He welcomed Secretary Biser, DEQ, who greeted the Board and thanked them for their science-based advice and service to DEQ, DHHS, and the State of North Carolina.

II. Review and Approve Agenda

Chairman Augspurger said there were changes to the agenda; he asked for a motion and second to accept the agenda as amended. Dr. DiGiulio moved to accept the agenda as modified, Dr. DeWitt 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 December 6, 2021

The draft meeting minutes were circulated to all members for review January 25, 2022. There were minor modifications; Dr. Vandenberg moved acceptance as modified; Dr. Kenyon seconded, and the December minutes were adopted unanimously as amended by rollcall vote.

V. DEQ and DHHS updates

DEQ Update:

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

1. Chemours Updates: –
 - a. The Consent Order (CO) addresses source control reducing wastewater contamination, 99.9% removal from air emissions; DAQ is following up on thermal oxidizer stack tests; and the deposition field data collected close to the facility as well as at or near the seven (7) regional offices are uploaded to the DEQ website. DWR is monitoring to ensure that the CO-required treatment system to capture dry weather flow by September 2020 is currently in compliance.
 - b. Barrier Wall – DEQ is currently reviewing the design report and quality assurance aspects of the wall design, proposed 70 feet deep by 6,000 feet long along the Cape Fear River to cut off groundwater contaminated with PFAS from reaching the river.
 - c. Well sampling in lower Cape Fear Basin – DEQ received Chemours’ framework to assess table 3 PFAS New Hanover, Brunswick, Pender, and Columbus Counties and is currently under review by DEQ staff. DWR staff expanding assessment sampling of wells, including New Hanover, Brunswick, Pender, Sampson, Bladen Counties. Long-term, statewide sampling in DWR well monitoring network is ongoing; 700 groundwater wells in 234 sites across the state are part of that network; 500 wells will be sampled, samples from 159 wells in 62 sites have been collected, analyzed for PFAS compounds; sampling will continue.
2. EPA letters – Information request CERCLA regulations letters sent 1/13/2022 to two (2) facilities in NC, from Chemours and the former DuPont plant in Greensboro. Purpose: to obtain existing information on how PFAS are being produced, managed, stored, treated, disposed of, and released, or potentially released in surface water, groundwater, soil and sediment.
3. Weaver fertilizer plant fire – DEQ still coordinating with local officials in Winston-Salem. DWM is assisting with specific materials disposal questions for remaining material; DAQ and DEMLR are involved with monitoring and assisting local officials with their efforts.
4. Colonial Pipeline – ongoing discussions with Colonial Pipeline regarding the filed complaint regarding the Mecklenburg total amount of the release; DEQ working on resolution in several areas, including determining the total amount of released petroleum.

DHHS Update:

Provided by Dr. Zack Moore, State Epidemiologist, DHHS

1. COVID updates: Rapid decline over the last several weeks, but with high levels of transmission, across different metrics. Wastewater monitoring on 24 sites around the state, looking at adding 12 more sites and expanding use, moving away from case-by-base reporting.
2. PFAS and other issues:
 - a. Environmental Health Dashboard to come online soon.
 - b. Fact sheet for private well water testing and tracing in development; will forward to Board when finalized.
 - c. Personnel changes: Kennedy Holt named Environmental Toxicologist for DHHS; Dr. Virginia Guidry named lead for Environmental Justice work.

VI. DEQ Ground and Surface Water Rule Presentation

Provided by Bridget Shelton, Chris Ventaloro, DWR-DEQ.

[DWR Ground and Surface Waste Rule Presentation](#)

The Board discussion that followed is available in the [meeting recording](#) at 1:04:00.

VII. DEQ Drinking Water Rule Presentation

Provided by Rebecca Sadosky, PhD, DEQ-DWR Public Water Supply Section.

[DWR Public Water Supply Presentation](#)

The Board discussion that followed is available in the [meeting recording](#) at 1:55:00.

VIII. DHHS Private Drinking Water Well Presentation

Provided by Dr. Virginia Guidry, Branch Head, Occupational and Environmental Epidemiology, Division of Public Health, NCDHHS.

[DHHS Private Well Presentation](#)

The Board discussion that followed is available in the [meeting recording](#) at 2:13:00.

IX. EPA PFAS Actions Briefing

Provided by Aaryn Jones, Special Assistant to EPA Region 4’s Office of the Regional Administrator.

Presentation is not available for download and can be viewed in the [meeting recording](#) at 2:24:00.

The Board discussion that followed is available in the [meeting recording](#) at 2:53:00.

X. Public Forum

Five (5) people signed up to speak; only two (2) were on the call to speak:

- 1. Dana Sargent, Cape Fear River Watch
- 2. Alyson Flynn

XI. Adjourn

Dr. Augspurgen entertained a motion to adjourn; Dr. Vandenberg moved, Dr. Knappe seconded, and with the agreement of the Board, and with no further business, Dr. Augspurgen adjourned the meeting.

The next meeting scheduled for April 4, 2022.

The meeting adjourned at 1:48 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Louise G. Hughes

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