

JOSH STEIN

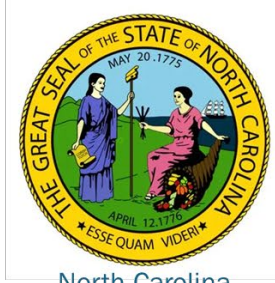
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Meeting Minutes  
December 3, 2025  
Public Meeting  
Archdale Ground Floor Hearing Room  
10:00 am

The North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Secretaries' Science Advisory Board (SSAB) met on Wednesday, December 3, 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; Jamie DeWitt, PhD (via Webex); Rich DiGiulio, PhD (via Webex); David Howard, MPH (via Webex); Elaina Kenyon, PhD, DABT (via Webex); Gina Kimble, PhD (via Webex); Detlef Knappe, PhD; Tom Starr, PhD; and John Vandenberg, PhD. (Note: SAB member Viney Aneja, PhD earlier informed us of his planned absence due to scholarly assignment in India). DEQ Staff in attendance were Sushma Masemore PE; Richard Rogers; Michael Scott, Adam Ulishney, Bill Hunneke, Frannie Nilsen, PhD; Jared Wilson, MS, Julie Robinson, Joelle Burtleson. DHHS staff in attendance were Kennedy Holt, MSPH, Virginia Guidry, PhD MPH, Zack Moore MD MPH.

**I. Call to Order**

Chairperson Augspurger called the meeting to order at 10:02 am.

**II. Review and Approve Agenda**

Agenda was approved unanimously at 10:04 am.

**III. Ethics Statement ([meeting recording](#) at 00:04:12)**

Read by Chairperson Augspurger; Dr. DeWitt, Dr. Knappe, and Dr. Vandenberg made statements.

**IV. Approval of Meeting Minutes for October 1, 2025 ([meeting recording](#) at 00:07:09)**

The minutes circulated in draft before the meeting were approved as final by unanimous vote.

**V. DEQ / DHHS updates ([meeting recording](#) at 00:09:13)**

***DEQ Updates – given by Sushma Masemore, PE; Deputy Secretary for Environment, DEQ***

Recently, DEQ has been sampling and testing for PFAS in various parts of the state, including the Piedmont Triad region (Pleasant Garden Township). This includes testing of small, disadvantaged communities and community public water systems. DEQ has identified areas above EPA's maximum contaminant level (MCL) for PFAS.

- **Pleasant Garden Township:** High levels of PFOA and PFOS were found in this region, near a fire station. The Pleasant Garden fire station has a groundwater well with PFAS associated with AFFF use. DEQ is working with the school system, nursing homes, and daycare centers to sample their drinking water from private wells. DEQ's programs are offering water testing for PFAS to homeowners on private wells. The

goal is to canvas every property within 2,000ft of the fire station.

- AFWF Well Water Study: The NC Collaboratory funded a study that collected well water from 417 rural fire stations across the state that are not served by public water. According to the samples analyzed, Pleasant Garden is more of an exception than the rule.
- Biosolids Study Update: The study consisted of sampling domestic and industrial wastewater treatment plants, and land application field sites. A few noteworthy findings are that PFOS was detected in all biosolids samples tested; 2 to 13% of the PFAS mass entering a wastewater treatment plant ended up in the biosolids; 87 to 98% of the PFAS entering a treatment plant was exited through the effluent stream.
  - Biosolid Study - Data Release Details: The biosolid study data will be rolled out in two phases. The first phase is a website release with the data file (all PFAS analyzed), EMC presentation, and possibly the legacy PFAS data summary. The Chemours-specific PFAS data summary from this study will be released and posted to this website. The goal is to have the website launched before the end of the year. The second phase will be a report with data analysis, conclusions, and evaluation of key findings, integrating understandings from local municipalities and wastewater treatment plants.

***DHHS Updates***– given by Virginia Guidry, PhD, Branch Head for Occupational and Environmental Epidemiology, DHHS.

- Respiratory virus season is here; wastewater surveillance for COVID-19, flu, and RSV is ongoing.
  - COVID levels are low, but flu is increasing (only flu A detected), and early RSV is being detected.
  - Testing for measles in wastewater is ongoing, with no detections since a trace detection over the summer.
- Results from the Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency Response (CASPer) in Buncombe County after Hurricane Helene are now available online.
  - 21% did not feel their tap water was safe.
  - 14.3% saw mold or smelled musty odors in their home after the hurricane.
  - Recommendations included expanding access to coordinated whole-person health care, strengthening awareness of emergency preparedness, and implementing a comprehensive environmental health education initiative.
- DHHS attended a public meeting in Pleasant Garden about PFAS detections and discussed potential fish advisories, reviewing guidelines from the Great Lakes Consortium for Fish Consumption Advisories.
- DHHS is supporting areas of the state facing environmental justice concerns.
  - 13 local health departments included environmental justice chapters in their 2025 Community Health Assessments.
  - The final report from the 2025 heat season will be available soon.
  - Over 5600 emergency department visits for heat-related illness were documented this past summer.



Action Item:

- VI. Human Health Risk Assessment for 1,4-Dioxane in Drinking Water Legislative Report** ([meeting recording at 00:31:53](#)) – *The Board revisits the previous charge from DEQ to review the legislative report and provide a formal response.*

Chairperson Augspurger introduced this item by recounting the history of the Board’s work to date, the charge received from DEQ, and a focus on a recent request to revise language in the Board’s proposed response to charge. He concluded the introduction with reference to change in language suggested by Dr. Starr, which was distributed to Board members on November 20, with an excerpt displayed in the meeting A/V materials. Dr. Starr made the motion to discuss a modified proposed change to a sentence characterizing aspects of the cancer slope factor; the motion was seconded and passed by roll call vote (6 yes/3 no). Following that discussion, a motion was made by Dr. Starr to adopt the language change; the motion did not receive a second. A motion was made by Dr. Vandenberg to adopt as final the version of the response to charge crafted at the October 1 SAB meeting (and distributed to Board members on October 10) by adding a link to the December 3 meeting recording to the links already included. The motion was seconded and passed by roll call vote (9 yes/1 no).

**HHRA Report:** [1,4-Dioxane in Drinking Water Human Health Risk Assessment | NC DEQ](#)  
**NCSSAB Recommendation:** [SAB Recommendation - Dec 2025](#)

Informational Items:

- VII. DWM Landfill PFAS data presentation** ([meeting recording at 01:40:14](#))  
*DWM staff presented the data submitted by landfill facilities across NC.*  
[DEQ DWM Landfill PFAS Presentation](#)

- VIII. Lunch 12:15-1:00pm**

- IX. DWM Bernard Allen Program presentation** ([meeting recording at 02:08:25](#))  
*DWM staff presented information on the utilization of the Bernard Allen Drinking Water Fund for PFAS compounds.*  
[DEQ DWM Bernard Allen Fund PFAS Sampling Presentation](#)

- X. DAQ Green House Gas Vehicle Standards Comments presentation** ([meeting recording at 02:34:02](#))  
*DAQ staff presented the comments NCDEQ provided regarding the EPA’s proposed rulemaking.*  
[DEQ DAQ Green House Gas Vehicle Comments Presentation](#)

- XI. Chemours Consent Order Toxicity Study Status Update** ([meeting recording at 03:06:20](#))  
*Dr. Frannie Nilsen presented a status update regarding the Consent Order toxicity studies.*  
[DEQ PFAS Consent Order Toxicity Study Updates](#)

- XII. Chemours Consent Order Aquatic Toxicity Results Synopsis** ([meeting recording at 03:16:40](#))  
*Dr. Frannie Nilsen presented a status update regarding the aquatic toxicity studies.*  
[DEQ Consent Order Aquatic Toxicity Testing Results Summary Presentation](#)

- XIII. Public Forum** - No one requested to address the meeting.

- XIV. Adjourn** – meeting adjourned at 3:02pm. Next meeting will be on April 1, 2026, in the Archdale Building Ground Floor Hearing Room

