



## Meeting Minutes

### Tuesday October 12, 2021 - Virtual Meeting

At 6:01pm, Chair Johnson called the meeting to order, read the ethics statement, and asked Ms. Renee Kramer to call the roll.

**Board members present:**

Chairman Dr. Jim Johnson  
Vice-Chair Dr. Marian-Johnson Thompson  
Vice-Chair Jamie Cole  
Jeff Anstead  
William Barber III  
Veronica Carter  
Dr. Deepak Kumar  
Carolina Fonseca Jimenez  
Dr. Danelle Lobdell – *Joined 6:06pm*  
Marilynn Marsh-Robinson  
Naeema Muhammad  
Elke Weil  
Sherri White-Williamson

**Board members absent:**

Rodney Sadler Jr.  
Carlos Velasquez  
Randee Haven-O'Donnell

**New Business:**

1. Presentation, *Board members Sherri White-Williamson and Naeema Muhammad facilitate*
  - a. *Summary of Legal Issues, Ryke Longest, Duke University*

Ryke Longest shared a presentation summarizing the legal developments of NC swine permits over the past 20 years. Mr. Longest also shared research on disparate impacts and health concerns of CAFOs, as

well as alternatives to the lagoon spray field system. To view Mr. Longest's presentation slides visit: [Pig Poop-to-Power \(nc.gov\)](#)

*b. Overview of Digesters, Dr. John Classen, North Carolina State University*

Dr. John Classen presented on the engineering and chemical processes of lagoons and biogas digesters. To view Dr. Classen's presentation slides visit: [Microsoft PowerPoint - DEQ EJEAB Oct 2021 Classen \[Read-Only\] \(nc.gov\)](#)

*c. Overview of Water Impacts, Kemp Burdette, Cape Fear River Keepers*

Kemp Burdette presented the impacts of CAFOs on the Cape Fear River Basin. Mr. Burdette explained that water quality is significantly impacted by CAFOs and biogas would likely increase negative impacts to water. To view Mr. Burdette's presentation slides visit: [PowerPoint Presentation \(nc.gov\)](#)

*d. Overview of Health Impacts, Dr. Sacoby Wilson, University of Maryland*

Dr. Sacoby Wilson presented potential impacts of biogas to water, air, and human health; as well as the connections between CAFOs and Environmental Racism, air pollution, and hurricane aftermath. To view Dr. Wilson's presentation slides visit: [Microsoft PowerPoint - Biogas Plants & Environmental Justice in North Carolinav2 \(nc.gov\)](#)

Veronica Carter commented that because fish consumption (from fish caught in the Cape Fear River Basin) is a significant source of food for many community members, this also a pathway of exposure to community health due to the poor water quality within the Cape Fear River Basin.

Mr. Burdette agreed and added his personal experience of seeing the amount of fishing that happens in both Sampson and Duplin County.

2. Community and Board Discussion and Q&A

*Community members from Sampson and Duplin Counties*

The first community member to speak was Devon Hall, Co-Founder and Executive Director of Rural Empowerment Association for Community Health (REACH) in Duplin County. Mr. Hall urged the Board to consider alternative methods, cumulative impact concerns, and the location of farms using biogas digestors. Mr. Hall invites the Board to ask questions from community members and then take those comments to DEQ.

The second community member to speak was Robert Moore, president of the Duplin County National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Mr. Moore shared disparate community statistics, negative impacts of biogas to air and water, and the refusal to use cleaner technology alternatives due to costs by the hog industry. Mr. Moore asked DEQ to consider cumulative impacts, monitoring provisions, and increased transparency when drafting biogas permits.

The third community member to speak was Reverend Melvin, pastor of Mount Zion AME Church in Sampson County. Reverend Melvin explained the need for community involvement and empowerment, as well as the importance of staying informed and keeping others accountable.

The fourth community member to speak was Edward D. Gillim, chair of the Democratic Party of Sampson County. Mr. Gillim suggested to correct the issues already in play without the addition of biogas. Mr. Gillim expressed a need to inform the community and stand together.

Chairman Johnson invited questions from the members of the Board to this evening's speakers.

Jeff Anstead requested more facts on the effects of CAFOs to Indigenous Peoples and would like to see more involvement with local tribes. Mr. Anstead gave an example of the Coharie Tribe's accomplishments in the improvement of the Coharie River in Sampson County. Mr. Anstead also mentioned that the Tribal Administration Bureau is located near a CAFO and is known to emit noticeable odor.

Sherri White-Williamson reminded the Board of an advisory letter to be considered, signed, and sent to Secretary Biser.

Veronica Carter challenges DEQ to heed the advice given by the Board.

### *3. Public Comment Period*

The Board heard from 21 members of the public who provided their views on biogas permitting. For more details on Public Comment Period visit the recording (timestamp 1:31:00): [DEQ's EJ and Equity Advisory Board Listening Session 10-12-2021 - YouTube](#)

Following the Public Comment Period, Ms. Carter made a motion to adopt the advisory letter drafted by Ms. White-Williamson and Ms. Muhammad to be signed and sent to Secretary Biser. Motion was seconded by Mr. Anstead.

Several members of the Board thanked the public and community members for their participation in the listening session.

At 8:34 pm, Ms. Carter made a motion to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Chairman Johnson.