



ROY COOPER
Governor

MICHAEL S. REGAN
Secretary

S. JAY ZIMMERMAN
Director

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

Pender County Interbasin Transfer (IBT) Certificate Request Pender County, North Carolina

The North Carolina Environmental Policy Act (G.S. §113A) requires that the Division of Water Resources determine whether a proposed major agency action will significantly affect the environment. The Pender County Interbasin Transfer (IBT) is such a major action. The proposed project will transfer 14.5 million gallons of water per day (mgd), calculated as the average day of a (maximum) calendar month, from the Cape Fear River IBT basin to the South River, Northeast Cape Fear, and New River IBT basins, as shown in Exhibit 1-2 of the environmental assessment. This transfer volume represents the projected 2045 demands of the existing customer base and anticipated growth of the service area.

Pender County Utilities (PCU) plans to expand public infrastructure into parts of the county that do not currently have water utility services. In addition, PCU is also taking steps to become a regional water provider both as the primary source and emergency interconnections to neighboring utilities that are currently reliant on groundwater for their potable water source. The utilities that have decided to partner with PCU as co-applicants to the requested IBT certificate include the Town of Burgaw, Town of Topsail Beach, Town of Surf City, Town of Wallace (in neighboring Duplin County), and Utilities, Inc.

PCU obtains its raw water supply from the Cape Fear River via the Lower Cape Fear Water and Sewer Authority (LCFWASA). The LCFWASA intake and associated Kings Bluff Raw Water Pumping Station are located just above Lock and Dam #1. The raw water is then transmitted via LCFWASA's transmission lines to PCU's water treatment plant, located in the Cape Fear River basin. The finished water is proposed to be distributed throughout the PCU service area including the Cape Fear River, South River, Northeast Cape Fear River, and the New River IBT basins.

To determine whether the proposed Pender County IBT will cause significant environmental impacts, an environmental assessment has been prepared. The environmental assessment is attached. It contains detailed information on the key issues, including a detailed description of the proposed project, and potential environmental impacts with proposed mitigation measures. The following is a summary of the findings from the environmental impact analysis conducted:

- No construction is directly associated with this requested IBT approval, and any construction activity associated with facilitating the transfer of water in the future may

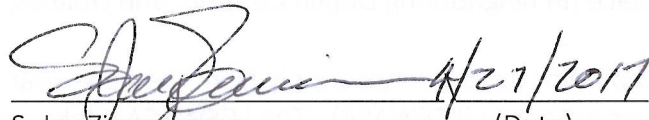
require its own environmental review process. Therefore, direct impacts to land and water resources are anticipated to be insignificant.

- The combined Cape Fear–Neuse River Basin OASIS Hydrologic Model was utilized to demonstrate that the proposed IBT will not significantly change anticipated future flow and water quality conditions in the source basin. A summary of secondary and cumulative impacts is included in Chapter 5 of the environmental assessment and mitigation efforts associated with any potential secondary and cumulative impacts are detailed in Chapter 6.

The preferred alternative was selected because it meets the projected water supply demands while minimizing any potential impacts resulting from the IBT. Based on the analysis conducted for the environmental assessment, it has been concluded that the Pender County IBT Certificate will not have a significant adverse effect on the quality of the environment.

No environmental impact statement will be prepared; this FONSI completes the environmental review record. The FONSI and environmental assessment shall be available for inspection and comment for 30 days at the State Clearinghouse.

Summary of FONSI for publication in the Environmental Bulletin: After completion of an environmental assessment under G.S. 113A, a FONSI has been made in the case of the proposed Pender County Interbasin Transfer Certificate. Information supporting the need for the proposed project was reviewed along with relative impacts, other alternative approaches, and mitigating measures.


S. Jay Zimmerman (Date)
Director, Division of Water Resources