

Secretaries' Science Advisory Board

MEETING MINUTES

Ground Floor Hearing Room, Archdale Building

Monday, June 6, 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, June 6, 2022 in person in the Ground Floor Hearing Room, Archdale Building, 512 N. Salisbury Street, in a public meeting. SAB members in attendance were: Tom Augspurger, PhD (Chair); Viney Aneja, PhD; Jamie DeWitt, PhD; Rich Di Giulio, PhD; Dave Dorman, PhD; Elaina Kenyon, PhD; Gina Kimble, PhD; Detlef Knappe, PhD; Thomas Starr, PhD and John Vandenberg, PhD. Also, in attendance were DEQ and DHHS staff: DEQ Assistant Secretary Sushma Masemore; Frannie Nilsen, PhD; Virginia Guidry, PhD; Mike Abraczinskas; Michael Pjetraj; Brian Wrenn; Michael Scott; Richard Rogers; Julie Grzyb; Sharon Martin; Sara Kreuser and Louise Hughes.

I. Call to Order (Chairman Tom Augspurger)

Meeting called to order at 10:13 AM. Chairman Augspurger said that during the virtual meetings from 2019 until now, the Board has reviewed public comments on the hexavalent chromium draft and produced a final recommendation responsive to the charge from DEQ; reviewed and discussed recent GenX research documents to provide the 3-year revisiting of the Board's earlier recommendation; reviewed other research on PFAS; responded to the charge from DEQ and DHHS on differing approaches for addressing the many PFAS in the environment; and crafted a path forward regarding PFAS, and he thanked the Board for their work. He noted that Dr. Stoskopf was traveling and not attending today's meeting; Drs. Moore and Guidry are currently selecting another representative for the community health directors, as Mr. Madden has taken another position and resigned his place with the NCSSAB.

II. Review and Approve Agenda

Chairman Augspurger asked for a motion and second to accept the agenda, as it was shared on May 25. Dr. Starr moved to accept the agenda, Dr. Kimble seconded, and the agenda was approved by unanimous vote.

[June 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, indicating he also receives funding from the government.

IV. Approval of Meeting Minutes for April 4, 2021

The draft meeting minutes were circulated to all members for review May 25, 2022. There was a typographical error in the last paragraph of page 2; Dr. Vandenberg moved acceptance as modified; Dr. Kenyon seconded, and the April minutes were adopted unanimously as amended by verbal vote.

Because this was the first in-person meeting since 2019, Chairman Augspurger asked the Board members present to introduce themselves and then asked for the Department updates.

V. DEQ and DHHS updates ([meeting recording at 00:21:37](#))

DEQ Update:

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

Mrs. Masemore gave updates on Chemours, PFAS legislation, the proposed GenX drinking water health advisory by EPA, groundwater sampling by DWR for PFAS, hexavalent chromium (CrVI) work, and public meetings scheduled in the Cape Fear River area.

Chemours – Groundwater treatment systems to be placed because of PFAS entering the Cape Fear River from groundwater. Water quality sampling is currently being done in the lower Cape Fear area in New Hanover, Pender, Brunswick, and Columbus Counties. Letters have been sent to private well owners regarding testing and treatment options. DAQ’s settlement agreement was signed April 5, 2022; the company is to pay the penalty assessed last year and to remain within the 1.0 lbs/month limit.

PFAS legislation – Proposed legislation protects citizens from the cost of PFAS mitigation; the Environmental Management Commission (EMC) is to adopt drinking water standards; and DEQ is authorized to compel manufacturers of PFAS to pay for water treatment.

Well sampling in lower Cape Fear Basin – 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, and results will be posted on the website. There is to be fish sampling and analysis in the mid- and lower-Cape Fear River, which will help illustrate the effects of PFAS on surface water; Dr. Nilsen will elaborate on this, and sampling will begin next week.

Hexavalent Chromium (CrVI) – Thank you for your diligent work; now that Duke Energy has the coal ash agreement in place, work proceeds on CrVI protection, as it is regulated under the Toxic Air Standards, and there is EPA support for the work.

DHHS Update:

Provided by Dr. Virginia Guidry, DHHS

1. PFAS and other issues:
 - a. Supporting DEQ efforts on PFAS; fish consumption advisories made/calculated by DHHS.
 - b. Dermal toxicity test for GenX requested through the National Toxicology Program, fact sheet online regarding testing options, filtration options.
 - c. Environmental Health Dashboard to come online soon; beta version available soon for public comment; will send to Board for their review/comments. Will hear in August 2022 if funding received for environmental justice (EJ) communications development.
 - d. DHHS to comment on HHS EJ plan; June 18 deadline, and public participation plan is posted on DHHS website.
2. Climate Change – heat effects listed on website, as well as checklist for help.

3. Personnel changes: Josh Lowman from Massachusetts DEP is the OEE toxicologist; Dr. Wayne Spoo is the OEE risk assessor; Ashley Graham is the risk assessment educator.

VI. DEQ Priority PFAS List for North Carolina ([meeting recording at 00:52:20](#))

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

[DEQ Priority PFAS List for NC presentation](#)

VII. Lunch Break – 11:30-12:30

VI continued. Discussion continued after lunch, [meeting recording at 01:36:03](#).

VIII. DEQ PFAS Data Extrapolation Methods presentation ([meeting recording at 1:49:02](#))

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

[DEQ Methods to Assess PFAS presentation](#)

This presentation included DEQ's request for Board feedback on the study quality / suitability of two or three studies for deriving reference doses for PFAS compounds that are not going to be addressed by EPA but which exposure data indicates are present in NC. There was a discussion on whether the Board should recommend the data quality review approach to DEQ and have the staff do the reviews of the papers, or whether the Board would provide a data quality review as requested. It was noted that the Board expanded scope allowed either approach -- either doing the reviews or recommending the approach. The path forward was that Chairperson Augspurger will share study review guidance used by the National Toxicology Program and others (which will be provided by Drs. Nilsen and Dorman) to all Board members as well as the specific studies that DEQ would like reviewed. The Board members can use the guidance and their own experience to inform individual feedback on the studies' suitability at the next meeting. That can be an interim approach (advise on study quality) and may be sufficient in responding to the request from DEQ. The Board is not committing to do the reference dose derivation, rather an incremental step of advising on study quality.

IX. Public Forum

No speakers had signed up.

X. Adjourn

Chairman Augspurger reminded the Board of the next meeting, scheduled for August 1, 2022, at 10 AM in the Ground Floor Hearing Room of the Archdale Building. He then entertained a motion to adjourn, which was agreed by the Board, and with no further business, Chairman Augspurger adjourned the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 1:48 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Louise G. Hughes

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