

Secretaries' Science Advisory Board

MEETING MINUTES Webex Event Virtual Meeting Monday, October 4, 2021 11:00 AM-2:00 PM

The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Secretaries' Science Advisory Board (SAB) met on Monday, August 2, 2021, 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; Dave Dorman, DVM, PhD; Elaina Kenyon, PhD; Gina Kimble, PhD; Thomas Starr, PhD; and Betsey Tilson, MD, MPH. 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; Kim Gaetz; Sharon Martin; Bridget Shelton; Amy Risen, PhD; Joelle Burseson; Peter Johnston; Dylan Friedenber and Louise Hughes.

I. Call to Order (Chairman Tom Augspurger)

Meeting called to order at 11:03 AM. Chairman Augspurger noted that Dr. Stoskopf and Mr. Madden both had prior commitments, Dr. John Vandenberg is traveling, and they are not attending today's meeting. He congratulated Dr. Gina Kimble on her promotion to Laboratory Manager for Charlotte Water and reminded the Board members to periodically review their vitae as listed on the website to inform DEQ of any changes that need to be made.

II. Review and Approve Agenda

Chairman Augspurger noted the modifications to the draft meeting agenda to change the start time due to the technical difficulties encountered and shorten the mid-point break. Dr. Jamie DeWitt moved to accept the agenda as modified, Dr. Gina Kimble seconded, and the agenda was approved by unanimous rollcall vote.

[October 4, 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. Jamie 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. Detlef Knappe also explained his research on PFAS.

IV. Approval of Meeting Minutes for August 2, 2021

The draft meeting minutes were circulated to all members for review in September 2021. Dr. Elaina Kenyon asked that abbreviations should be explained at first use, for example "SOC". Dr. Tom Starr moved to approve

the minutes as amended; Dr. DeWitt seconded, and the August minutes were adopted unanimously by rollcall vote, pending the edits.

V. DEQ and DHHS updates

DEQ Update:

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

1. Mrs. Masemore noted there are many things going on for DEQ, but in the interest of time, she will provide a high-level overview of the most relevant activities:
 - Divisions of Waste Management and Water Resources are currently evaluating the 60% design barrier for Chemours. Compliance issues and enforcement actions in August are both ongoing matters being addressed.
 - EPA is in the process of releasing Gen-X toxicity findings later this month to early fall
 - EMC (Environmental Management Commission) has a critical role in the regulatory process; water quality matters, rule amendments to groundwater 2L rules for PFOA, PFOS will be considered in its November meeting, as part of today's agenda is to consider the literature supporting these amendments
 - Division of Air Quality has issued permits for ECOLAB and Flowers Timber Company for methyl bromide in their log fumigation process.

Dr. Aneja asked if Chemours' violations for air are being addressed; Director Mike Abraczinskas said the stack test in March indicated high emissions rates, which have been addressed by replacing the carbon absorber. DAQ is finalizing compliance and enforcement acts now.

DHHS Update:

Provided by Dr. Zack Moore, State Epidemiologist, DHHS

1. COVID updates: NC has seen decreases in most metrics over the last three weeks; highest rates among children. Encouraged by high effectiveness of vaccines; approval of booster for Pfizer for high-risk occupations, patients; anticipating discussions of vaccines for children. Wastewater monitoring on 19 sites around the state.
2. PFAS: getting information from EPA.
3. Climate and health efforts: DHHS awarded grants for support for the BRACE (Building Resilience Against Climate Effects) program.
4. Turnover in key staff in support of PFAS; attempting to fill those positions.

There were no questions about the DHHS update.

VI. DEQ Emerging Compound Framework and PFAS Strategy Presentation

Chairman Augspurger thanked them for the informative presentation and asked if there were any questions for Mrs. Masemore and Dr. Nilsen. Dr. Starr commented that because he would not be able to attend after the break, he would offer his comments now: he said it would be useful to know the assumption differences between toxicity

values, drinking water standards and daily dose amounts used in the calculations presented here, and to clarify the differences.

DEQ's Emerging Compound and PFAS Strategy Presentation Oct 4, 2021

VII. “PFAS in NC” Data Discussion

Dr. DeWitt asked if the DEQ staff would briefly review the differences in groundwater and drinking water standards. Directors Scott and Smith (DWM, DWR) explained that the standards (2L for drinking water and 2B for surface water) are meant to preserve drinking water and overall uses; IMACs are typically used for guidance for the difference levels, according to need and use (water supply, recreation, aquatic life). There was discussion of the use of MCLs to determine a chronic value; ATSDR has not released a chronic value for PFAS. The Board requested a summary of the difference between the EPA and ATSDR reports. There was also discussion of EPA’s focus of chemical-by-chemical versus the grouping approach, and other states’ approaches. The overall agreement was to continue to examine approaches that are protective of human health.

VIII. Public Forum

Ms. Dana Sargent of Cape Fear River Watch signed up to speak. She is the Executive Director, and thanked the Board for the presentation; however, she found it “alarming and disturbing,” as the PFAS have been present for many decades, DEQ is aware of the harm they cause, and has the means to reduce the amount of PFAS in drinking water and the Cape Fear River basin. She commented that the Consent Order gives DEQ the authority to require non-targeted permit-holders to prioritize action, and NPDES permit-holders to remove PFAS from their discharges. She thanked the Board for their time and attention.

IX. Adjourn

Chairman Augspurger thanked the DEQ staff for their support in the virtual platform setting, the presentations and thanked the Board for their attention to public health.

With no further business, Chairman Augspurger adjourned the meeting.

The next meeting is scheduled for December 6, 2021; details of meeting logistics to be announced.

The meeting adjourned at 2:04 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Louise G. Hughes

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