



FEB. 10, 2020

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To our fellow residents of Brunswick County,

Recently our county was the focus of media attention after an independent report claimed Brunswick County has the highest levels of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in its drinking water. Hearing this kind of news is concerning for everyone, regardless of whether you lived in the region when GenX (a PFAS compound) was discovered in the Cape Fear River in 2017, or if you recently moved to the area. And we recognize that it was particularly upsetting to our county's families who want to ensure their children are protected.

We have concerns, too. As public servants who work, live, and have families here, it is discouraging to all of us that our weekly water samples show evidence that PFAS compounds continue to pollute the Cape Fear River primarily due to Chemours' Fayetteville Works facility. Meanwhile, we are working as quickly as we can to install an advanced low-pressure reverse osmosis treatment system to remove these contaminants from our water.

Every weekly test sample taken at the Northwest Water Treatment Plant since June 2017 has fallen below the EPA and the NC Department of Health and Human Services' (NCDHHS) established health advisories. If we ever exceed either level, we would notify you, the municipalities, the school district, and the news media immediately. We also publish each test result and information online for transparency at brunswickcountync.gov/genx

However, these health advisory levels only apply to a few regulated PFAS compounds. There is limited research and scientific data on most known PFAS contaminants—which number in the thousands—and thorough health studies require time to ensure accurate results. That's why Brunswick County made a proactive decision in 2018 to install a low-pressure reverse osmosis system at our Northwest Water Treatment Plant to protect our water and remain below any health advisory levels that are likely to be established in the future.

Low-pressure reverse osmosis is considered the best way to remove contaminants from water. Brunswick County's Board of Commissioners have already committed \$137 million to install the new treatment system and upgrade the plant's capacity to support our county's growth. We are in the final review phase for a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit from the NC Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). The County will receive bids from contractors on March 5 and the Board is expected to issue the bids in April and a notice to construct in May. The new system is estimated to go online 30 to 36 months after construction starts, depending on which bid alternate the commissioners select.

The presence of these contaminants in the Cape Fear River continues to raise questions, but many of the potential answers rely on the expertise, research, and authority of federal and state agencies like the EPA, NCDHHS, and DEQ. These agencies often have more access to certain financial and informational resources that local governments and public utilities typically do not. It is also paramount that they hold Chemours and other contaminators accountable for polluting our drinking water source.

Brunswick County also wants to hold Chemours responsible for its actions. The County has joined other utilities in the region to sue DuPont and Chemours to make Chemours stop polluting our primary source of drinking water. The County also seeks monetary damages from Chemours to hold it accountable for the millions of dollars of advanced treatment methods the County is having to spend to counteract the contaminants Chemours wrongfully discharged into the Cape Fear River.

Moving forward, our team will continue to work on our advanced treatment system project, and we will keep you informed about our water quality and our efforts to bring you the most protectively treated drinking water into our homes, schools, and businesses.

Below are some additional websites to learn more about PFAS and who to contact for toxicology or epidemiology questions. Thank you for your time and your concern for our water quality.

https://epi.dph.ncdhhs.gov/oea/a_z/pfas.html

<https://deq.nc.gov/news/key-issues/genx-investigation/health-related-resources-about-genx-pfoa-and-pfas>

<https://ncpfastnetwork.com>

<https://www.awwa.org/Resources-Tools/Resource-Topics/PFAS>

Sincerely,

County Manager Randell Woodruff

Public Utilities Director John Nichols

Health and Human Services Director David Stanley