

Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League

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Ms. Elizabeth Biser

Secretary

North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality

217 West Jones Street

Raleigh, North Carolina 27603

August 10, 2021

Dear Secretary Biser:

I write on behalf of Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League (BREDL) and our impacted members regarding the June 30, 2021, discharge of 1,4 dioxane from the TZ Osborne Wastewater Treatment Plant in Greensboro. In its July 1st release about the spill, the Division of Water Resources (DWR) noted that "...municipalities with drinking water intakes downstream" had been notified. There was reporting that Pittsboro, Fayetteville, and Wilmington would be sampling for 1,4 dioxane, but nothing about Sanford's testing plans.

On July 3, I contacted Scott Christiansen, the Water Filtration Facility Administrator for the City of Sanford, asking if they were sampling for 1,4 dioxane following the spill. On July 7th, as I had not gotten a reply from Mr. Christiansen, I then reached out to the Division of Water Resources (DWR) asking if they had heard from Sanford regarding any sampling following the discharge. They had not. On July 12th, in reply to a public records request I sent to him on behalf of BREDL, Mr. Christiansen finally replied that he had been on vacation, and that they had taken water samples that day and would re-check on the 26th.

If there were no samples pulled soon after the initial discharge from TZ Osborne, did that protect those that drink Sanford's water? This whole episode reveals weaknesses in local government response to these public health emergencies. Equally troubling—DEQ allows local governments to share their water testing results for unregulated chemicals "voluntarily."

Considering this information, Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League urges the Department to consider the enactment of emergency, temporary, or permanent rules that require the following:

1. Testing and analysis be performed after a spill has been reported/detected, including the recommended time frame for such testing.
2. That water providers notify their users of discharges/spills immediately.
3. Additionally, that water providers notify users immediately of any detection of unregulated chemicals, as well as detection of other contaminants that exceed the regulatory limit.
4. The Department should post the results on the DEQ website and send out notices to their media/interested parties lists.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Therese Vick".

Therese Vick

North Carolina Healthy, Sustainable Communities/Coal Ash Campaign Coordinator