

Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League

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VIA EMAIL

Secretary Elizabeth Biser

North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality

217 West Jones Street

Raleigh, North Carolina 27603

Dear Secretary Biser:

On June 15, 2022, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued new health advisory limits on four PFAS. Those limits are:

PFOA	0.004 ppt
PFOS	0.02 ppt
GenX	10 ppt
PFBS	2000 ppt

In addition : “EPA recommends that communities and water systems that measure *any* levels of **PFOA** or **PFOS** or that measure **Gen X chemicals** or **PFBS** at levels higher than the health advisory levels inform their customers and consider taking actions to reduce PFAS levels in their

drinking water by installing treatment technologies or obtaining a new uncontaminated source of drinking water, if available.”

Few water systems or providers haven taken steps to ensure that the public is adequately notified. Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League (BREDL) has been attempting to determine what specific actions the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has undertaken to encourage, recommend, or otherwise assist local governments and private water systems in their communication efforts; or in helping them understand the importance of communicating directly with their customers.

BREDL has been communicating with local governments regarding any guidance they have received from the Department on the four PFAS included in the EPA health advisory. This is the question we asked one municipality: *“Has the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality asked/advised/recommended that [your] water customers be notified regarding levels of the four PFAS (PFOA, PFOS GenX, and PFBS) included in the Environmental Protection Agency's June 2022 health advisory? EPA recommends that water providers notify their users if any amount of these two, PFOA and PFOS, are present. They are consistently detected in [your] finished water at levels substantially higher than the EPA recommendations.”* Their answer was: *“No, I have not been contacted by the DEQ.”* It is unclear to us what, if anything, DEQ is doing to impress on local government and private water providers the importance of notifying their users.

Our research on just six Central North Carolina systems reveals that two of those chemicals, PFOA and PFOS, are being detected at levels much higher than the health advisory limits at all of the facilities we reviewed. One is still measuring PFOA and PFOS above the health advisory levels despite their granulated active carbon advanced filtration system. As mentioned above, the potential public health impacts are so serious that EPA recommends that water providers notify their customers if *any* amount is found. The reports we reviewed were from Summer, 2022. These six systems serve several hundred thousand people. Our research is ongoing.

The excuse of not having statutory authority to require that water systems notify their customers is not acceptable. We have heard a similar excuse from local government—that they are “not required” to notify their customers individually. Therefore, Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League is urgently requesting that the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality

notify the public about the PFAS that are being found in their drinking water using press releases, emails, even the US mail. This will give water users the information that they need to make choices that will protect their and their families' health based on the latest information.

Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League appreciates your attention to this matter.

Regards,

Therese Vick

North Carolina Healthy, Sustainable Communities Campaign Coordinator