



North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

Pat McCrory
Governor

Richard O. Brajer
Secretary

Randall Williams, M.D., FACOG
Deputy Secretary for Health Services

October 15, 2015

Dear Well Owner,

As you are aware, you and other well owners in the vicinity of Duke Energy coal ash impoundments recently received a letter and Health Risk Evaluation (HRE) from the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NC DEQ, formerly NC DENR) and the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS.) The previous correspondence was to inform you of the results of well water testing, along with a recommendation that your water was not safe for consumption.

We want to answer questions that we have received since well water testing began. This letter is meant to update you and provide additional information based on background sampling effort.

While the water in your well complies with current Federal Safe Drinking Water Act standards, the challenge is that Federal standards have not yet been developed for hexavalent chromium and vanadium, the constituents in question. Therefore, the recommendations contained in our previous correspondence were based on standard public health practices that attempt to ascertain the lifetime risks of developing cancer. The advisory to not drink your water was based on a one in a million risk of developing cancer, for an average person, as a result of consuming well water over the average lifetime of approximately 70 years. Enclosed is a graphic that shows other lifetime odds of death from other events as previously noted on the NCDEQ website.

Since sending the previous letter, NC DEQ conducted sampling and testing of private wells some distance from coal ash impoundments in an effort to establish natural, background conditions. These samples indicate that the levels of vanadium and hexavalent chromium in your well water are generally in the range of the levels of these same constituents in some wells and some municipal drinking water supplies in other parts of the state. The fact that some well owners many miles from coal ash impoundments and municipal water customers are consuming water with levels at the same level or higher, leads investigators to believe that vanadium and hexavalent chromium also occur naturally.

As a result, the NC DEQ is studying the natural occurrence of these constituents in North Carolina and anticipates having final results by the end of the year. Early indicators are that these constituents vary significantly, naturally, in water across the state. In the meantime, NC DHHS, through the Division of Public Health, is also working with external agencies to better understand health risk of these constituents.

www.ncdhhs.gov

Telephone 919-855-4800 • Fax 919-715-4645

Location: 101 Blair Drive • Adams Building • Raleigh, NC 27603

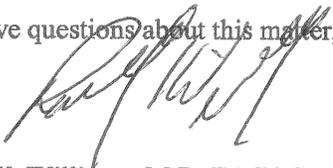
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Should you wish to explore water treatment options in the near-term, the NC DHHS can assist your local health department in doing so. It is important to note, however, that while treatment systems may decrease these constituents, it might not completely eliminate them from your water.

At NC DHHS and NC DEQ, our mission is to protect the health and safety of all North Carolinians and the environment. To that end, when asked to assess the potential risks of consuming untreated well water, we issue recommendations that assume the maximum, most conservative protections. Our Departments will continue to provide you with updates and, as noted above, we stand ready to assist you however we can.

If you have questions about this matter, please call 919-707-5900.



Randall W. Williams, M.D. FACOG
DHHS Deputy Secretary for Health Services



Tom Reeder
DEQ Assistant Secretary for the Environment