

Agenda Item: AG11-31 Request to Proceed to Public Hearing with the Proposed Reclassification of Neuse River and Associated Quarry in Johnston County to Class WS-IV (PA) and WS-IV CA

Explanation:

Johnston County has requested that portions of the Neuse River and an abandoned quarry be reclassified. The quarry is to receive water from a proposed Neuse River intake, and is to be reclassified to Water Supply-IV (WS-IV) Critical Area (CA). The subject portions of the Neuse River are to be reclassified to WS-IV CA and WS-IV (Protected Area or PA). The reclassification is needed to construct the public water supply intake and utilize the quarry's water as a public water supply, in order to meet water demands projected through 2050; thus, this reclassification serves the public interest per Executive Order #70.

Division of Water Resources staff has no objections to the proposal, and Division of Environmental Health staff supports it. A Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI) has been issued for this project. Finally, the waters to be reclassified meet water supply standards according to 2011 DWQ studies, except for high chloride levels in the quarry. Dilution and reduced residence times in the quarry, which will occur once river water is pumped in it, should result in lowered chloride levels.

If reclassified, regulations affecting new development and wastewater discharges would apply in all the proposed areas, and regulations affecting new land application sites would apply only in the proposed CAs. There are currently no permitted wastewater discharges and no known proposed wastewater discharges or development in any of the proposed areas. Furthermore, there are no known proposed land application sites in the proposed CAs.

The proposed areas are located entirely within the jurisdiction of Johnston County. This local government would be required to modify its water supply watershed protection ordinance within 270 days after the reclassification effective date. Given that Johnston County requested the reclassification, it did not need to provide a resolution stating it would amend its water supply watershed protection ordinance once the reclassification becomes effective.

At the July 2011 Water Quality Committee (WQC) meeting, the WQC granted staff approval to proceed to the full Environmental Management Commission (EMC) with the reclassification. The draft fiscal analysis' quantifiable results revealed a one-time cost of approximately \$600 to the state and \$500 to Johnston County. The proposed effective date for this reclassification is July 1, 2012.

Recommendation:

That the EMC grant staff approval to proceed to public hearing with the proposed reclassification.