

“Issuance of Advisories/Drinking Water Standards” (HB 1005, SB 779)

Is BAD for your health and BAD for the public’s right to know about their water!

This bill would:

► **Prevent health advisories being issued to both well users and public water customers in the case of documented contamination** of their water supply, except for very limited cases.

This would eliminate a key component of the State and local Health Departments’ Mission: “protect communities from communicable diseases, epidemics, and contaminated food and water.” DHHS has developed scientifically documented health screening levels for hundreds of contaminants, found in some places in NC groundwater, which are NOT regulated under the short list of federal drinking water standards (MCL’s) for substances common in public water systems. *Other exemptions mentioned in the bill are meaningless--State MCL’s or standards have never been passed in NC. Treatment Techniques aren’t relevant to wells. IMACs are both rare and temporary.*

► **Create conditions similar to what has happened in Flint, Michigan.** Not only did officials make bad decisions about switching the water source and skimping on treatment to save state funds, they also refused to **notify** water customers about the toxic lead contamination that resulted! This lack of notice resulted in hundreds of cases of lead poisoning that could have been prevented if people had known to protect their families by using another water source. Some officials are now being prosecuted!

If NC passes this bill, our long-standing practice of protecting public health by providing non-regulatory health notifications would become **ILLEGAL**, meaning that thousands could be poisoned by contaminants in their water that are unregulated or with outdated standards. **Principled public health officials could be charged, simply for protecting the public health, when information was available in agency files to help protect the public from contaminated water!**

► **Deprive the public of health-protecting knowledge established using their taxpayer dollars!** Health screening level notifications must continue for well owners for contamination when health effects have been documented in peer reviewed studies. Notifications must be carefully worded to ensure well owners understand these are NOT enforceable standards but simply advisory notices to help protect their household’s health. Notifications must include the level of risk, comparison with the risk from drinking water with known contaminants in the closest public water supply and advice about measures that can be taken (hooking up to public water, installing a filtration system, minimizing use in drinking and cooking). **Public water customers also deserve non-regulatory notification** when contaminants are their water at levels that can cause adverse health effects, whether regulated or not.

Example: Notifications sent last year about hexavalent chromium above a DHHS health screening level of 0.07 micrograms/liter in wells were scientific and consistent with long-standing DHHS policy and practice. People trusted them. Well owners who got later letters saying their water was “safe” simply don’t believe it, and they shouldn’t. Drinking water contaminated with hexavalent chromium will increase their risk of cancer and other health conditions, and they have a right to know this!

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