US EPA Fayetteville, North Carolina PFAS Community Engagement
August 14, 2018

Location: Crown Ballroom
1960 Coliseum Drive, Fayetteville, NC 28306

Listening Session Summary

Welcome and Introduction

Mary Walker, Deputy Regional Administrator, EPA Region 4, welcomed and thanked state and local officials and community members for their attendance and participation. Ms. Walker emphasized the importance of the community engagements to EPA's ongoing work.

Congressman Richard Hudson, North Carolina's 8th District, recognized that clean water is not a partisan issue. Congressman Hudson indicated that it is a priority to help North Carolina get the assistance it needs to address PFAS.

Michael S. Regan, Secretary, North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NC DEQ), thanked EPA Region 4 for planning the community engagement and Congressman Hudson for his attendance. Mr. Regan acknowledged that PFAS is both a North Carolina issue and a national issue and that local, state, and federal governments must work hand in hand to solve the problem.

Trey Glenn, Regional Administrator, EPA Region 4, recognized Congressman Hudson's constant attention on this matter and PFAS as a priority for EPA to ensure North Carolina and all the United States have safe and clean drinking water. EPA continues to work with North Carolina and its local governments to address concerns in public water systems and private wells. Mr. Glenn indicated that the community engagement is critical to understanding how EPA can support states and local governments.

Dr. Peter Grevatt, Director, U.S. EPA, Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water, indicated that this is one of several community engagements that EPA is conducting on PFAS and that it is important for EPA to hear the perspectives of communities as EPA develops the PFAS management plan. Dr. Grevatt briefly described EPA's commitment:

1. EPA will initiate steps to evaluate the need for a maximum contaminant level (MCL) for PFOA and PFOS. We will convene our federal partners and examine everything we know about PFOA and PFOS in drinking water.
2. EPA is beginning the necessary steps to propose designating PFOA and PFOS as "hazardous substances" through one of the available statutory mechanisms, including potentially CERCLA Section 102.
3. EPA is currently developing groundwater cleanup recommendations for PFOA and PFOS at contaminated sites and will complete this task by fall of this year.

4. EPA is taking action in close collaboration with our federal and state partners to develop toxicity values for GenX and PFBS by this summer.

Dr. Grevatt informed participants that EPA has a docket (http://www.regulations.gov: enter Docket ID No. EPA-OW-2018-0270) available to provide comments on the development of EPA's National PFAS Management Plan.

The materials presented at all of the following sessions can be download at the EPA website: https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2018-08/documents/r4_combined_presentations_.pdf This summary reflects a high-level synthesis of the perspectives participants shared during the community engagement event and do not imply consensus, endorsement, or agreement on any of the topics.

Science Panel

Scientists from the EPA, NC DEQ, and ATSDR presented basic scientific information about PFAS and related substances, the ongoing research at their organizations, and upcoming research. The following scientists presented information at the community engagement:

- Dr. Andy Gillespie, Associate Director, EPA, Office of Research and Development (ORD)
- Laurence Libelo, Chief, Science Policy Branch, Office of Superfund Remediation and Technology Innovation, EPA, Office of Land and Emergency Management
- Thomas Speth, Associate Director for Science (Acting), EPA, National Risk Management Research Laboratory
- Linda Culpepper, Interim Director, North Carolina Division of Water Resources
- Dr. William (Bill) Cibulas, Director, Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), Division of Toxicology and Human Health Sciences

Local Issues Panel Presentations

This session provided an opportunity for local and state officials to frame local issues resulting from PFAS contamination. Officials described the identification, characterization, and response to PFAS in North Carolina including PFOA, PFOS, and GenX. Elevated levels of PFAS were detected in the Cape Fear watershed as part of a study by the University of North Carolina and the EPA's Office of Research and Development. The state confirmed the levels and found the wastewater effluent from a Chemours facility to be a primary source of PFAS, especially GenX. Officials summarized sampling of surface waters, drinking water, wastewater effluents, and air emissions. They described their responses to the contamination, and the associated costs, including providing water from a different source and pilot studies on treatment options. The following officials shared their experiences:

- Thomas Speth, Associate Director for Science (Acting), EPA, National Risk Management Research Laboratory
- Carel Vandermeyden, Director of Engineering, Cape Fear Public Utility Authority
- Michael M. Borchers, Assistant Director, City of Greensboro Water Resources Department
- Mike Abraczinskas, Director, North Carolina Division of Air Quality
- Michael Scott, Director, North Carolina Division of Waste Management

Community Presentations

This session provided an opportunity for community groups to share experiences with PFAS. Representatives from state, county, water utility, and community organizations shared their stories and experiences with PFAS. The presentations are available at: https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2018-08/documents/r4_combined_presentations_.pdf

The following individuals shared their communities' experience:

- Kemp Burdette, Riverkeeper Cape Fear River Watch, representing Sierra Club, North Carolina Conservation Network, North Carolina Coastal Federation and the Southern Environmental Law Center
- Emily Donovan, Co-Founder Clean Cape Fear

Community Listening Session

Mary Walker welcomed community members and groups and articulated the importance of the listening sessions in development of EPA's National PFAS Management Plan. The session was kicked off with comments from John Szoka, North Carolina House of Representatives, 45th District. Representative Szoka expressed that the PFAS issue must be addressed at all levels of government. He expressed that North Carolina is working to provide resources to communities through the NC DEQ and other mechanisms (e.g., grants, loans).

Additionally, 50 community members shared input during the community listening session. The following is a synthesized list of themes and points shared during the listening session:

Health Impacts

Community members shared accounts of health impacts on their families, animals, and communities attributed to PFAS exposure. Commenters expressed their desire to understand how current and past exposure may impact their family and the potential for future medical problems, including cumulative impacts from all PFAS. Community members shared how their families and friends have experienced severe medical impacts, and their frustration that the community was still at risk. Parents urged the EPA to take action for their children. Commenters identified specific populations, such as firefighters, as potentially at a higher risk. They recommended EPA identify and address community health impacts of PFAS, including their desire for these groups to be monitored and given access to medical care and information.

Location of Community Engagements

Several community members expressed a desire for a community engagement event in Wilmington, North Carolina. They felt that a community engagement there is necessary to understand the impacts from PFAS contamination on their community and expressed that the timing and distance of the Fayetteville-based community engagement made it difficult for community members from Wilmington to participate.

Risk Characterization

Community members pointed to risk characterization as a critical first step to addressing PFAS in communities where PFAS have been identified in both finished drinking water and surface water. Commenters urged the EPA to support development of more analytic methods and tools and

recommended that the EPA conduct a more rigorous review of chemicals and their environmental and health impacts before approval. Commenters expressed frustration at the lack of information provided to employers and employees near sites where PFAS were discharged. Community members stressed their desire for the EPA to place a greater emphasis on source water protection.

Risk Communication

Community members felt that basic information about PFAS exposure and impacts to communities is not successfully reaching people and warned that confusion about PFAS is eroding public confidence. Commenters expressed frustration at the lack of information on how long the community was expected to use bottled water, which is an expensive and temporary solution. They also expressed frustration that there were no signs or communications to protect children wading in the rivers. Commenters recommended that the EPA move quickly to distribute existing research, process information, and set deadlines for ongoing work.

Standards/Guidance

Many community members suggested the need for enforceable standards for PFAS to address the broader family of chemicals. Commenters urged EPA to set an enforceable standard (i.e., MCL) and move to enact protective mechanisms to avoid PFAS contamination and its associated impacts in the future. Several commenters were encouraged to see heightened attention to the issue of PFAS contamination but urged EPA to provide guidance on steps that impacted communities can take today. Additionally, they recommended that EPA consider classifying PFAS as a hazardous substance and add the family of chemicals to the toxic pollutant list.

Cost Impacts

Community members spoke of the high cost to communities, utilities, and individuals addressing PFAS contamination. Commenters spoke of their frustration that they are bearing the cost of monitoring and treating medical complications due to PFAS exposure and their dissatisfaction that industry had not been held accountable for cleanup, treatment, and health impact costs. They expressed frustration that they felt jobs and economic development for industry was weighted more heavily by elected officials than community health and safety. Commenters recognized that not everyone in their community can afford bottled water and spoke on behalf of members of the community that work low-income jobs and pay rent, expressing that many are unable to afford or install protective solutions. Commenters expressed the need for additional funding for the NC DEQ to help with risk characterization and to support health monitoring and treatment solutions. They expressed frustration that the polluter is not assuming responsibility and is not engaging with impacted communities.

Remediation

Community members urged the EPA to focus not only on treating drinking water, but to work on eliminating additional PFAS discharges. Commenters expressed a sense of urgency for dealing with cleanup issues and expressed concern about the impacts of PFAS contamination on important livelihoods, such as the tourism sector near Wilmington. Commenters urged the EPA to identify industrial polluters as soon as possible. They also expressed the desire to have more information about the treatment technologies employed to treat PFAS in their drinking water.