

April 4, 2016

Governor McCrory  
North Carolina Office of the Governor  
20301 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699-0301

Dear Governor McCrory,

Over the past few weeks, you and your administration have taken troubling steps that place at risk the health of those who live near and downstream of Duke Energy's leaking coal ash pits.

As the leader of our state, the responsibility to protect North Carolinians rests with you. We urge you to demand that leaders in your administration prioritize the health of the people and families living near coal ash ponds in North Carolina. **You must take the following actions to protect the people of North Carolina** from Duke Energy's toxic coal ash pollution:

1. **Direct that your leaders at the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), especially DEQ Secretary van der Vaart, Assistant Secretary Reeder, and DHHS State Health Director Williams, listen to the State Toxicologist and experts in their agencies.** Emails obtained by the Winston Salem Journal indicate that technical experts at Office of Environmental Epidemiology Branch and the State Toxicologist are being ignored or sidelined altogether.
2. **Immediately inform the public that the 'do drink' letters were ill-advised and that the well water users near coal ash plants are still at risk.** State rules call for a lifetime cancer risk of no more than one in a million. Instead, the 'do drink' letters suggest well users will be safe drinking contaminated water, up to a concentration that your own scientists believe could impose a 1 in 700 risk of getting cancer. That is not "safe." Please reinstate the "do not drink" advisory.
3. **Direct that leadership at DEQ and DHHS stop misleading the public.** The federal Safe Drinking Water Act includes a limit for total chromium that is obsolete and does not adequately reflect risks from ingestion. Instead of protecting health, your administration is hiding behind shortcomings in the Safe Drinking Water Act and the failures of neighboring states and the federal government to enact adequate health protections. Well water users should receive an accurate report on the risks calculated by the agency's public health experts.
4. **Begin an investigation as to who overruled agency health experts.** The public deserves full disclosure as to how and why these actions took place. You must hold leaders in your administration accountable for telling families with contaminated water that they may begin drinking that water again.
5. **Listen to the thousands of North Carolinians that have asked the state to carry through its obligation to protect the public from coal ash pollution.** Community members have weighed in to tell your DEQ that no community is low priority and that every family living near coal ash deserves a safe cleanup. Capping coal ash in place is a cover-up, not a cleanup.

As the Governor of our state, it's time for you to take control of a situation that has gone from bad to worse for people living near Duke Energy coal ash pits. Please take action to show that your administration prioritizes the well-being of people in this state over the interests of a major polluter.

Signed,

**American Rivers**

Peter Raabe Conservation Director

**Catawba Riverkeeper Foundation**

Sam Perkins, Catawba Riverkeeper

**Cape Fear River Watch**

Kemp Burdette, Cape Fear RIVERKEEPER

**Environment North Carolina**

Dave Rogers, State Director

**Greenpeace NC**

Monica Embrey, Climate & Energy Campaigner

**MountainTrue**

Julie Mayfield, Co-Director

**NC Conservation Network**

Brian Buzby, Executive Director

**NC League of Conservation Voters**

Carrie Clark, Executive Director

**NC WARN**

John Runkle, Counsel

**Sound Rivers**

Matthew Starr, Upper Neuse Riverkeeper

**Southern Alliance for Clean Energy**

Amelia Shenstone, Campaigns Director

**Southern Environmental Law Center**

Derb Carter, North Carolina Director

**Waterkeeper Alliance**

Peter Harrison, Staff Attorney

**Winyah Rivers Foundation**

Christine Ellis, Deputy Director

**Yadkin Riverkeeper**

Will Scott, Yadkin Riverkeeper

CC:

DEQ Secretary, Donald van der Vaart

DEQ Assistant Secretary for the Environment, Tom Reeder

DHHS State Health Director, Randall Williams