

StarNews, WHQR, WWAY GenX Forum
June 29th • Kenan Auditorium • Wilmington, North Carolina

Deputy Secretary for Health Services, N.C. Department of Health & Human Services, Mark Benton

- (To determine the level of health risk) We relied on tests done on laboratory animals, there is a generally accepted procedure on how you translate a study specific to animals and humans.
 - The only published lab results on the water we have are from 2013-2014, so based on those amounts in the river we determined it posed a low risk.
- There is no current blood test available to be able to detect whether the GenX compound is in the body.
- The only compound we have looked at right now with the available evidence, is GenX.

New Hanover Regional Medical Center's Chief Physician Executive, Dr. Philip Brown

- Just in our hospital alone, we use 150,000 gallons of water a day. That includes food preparation, bathing, instrument sterilization.
 - Our community has very limited alternatives.

Cape Fear Riverkeeper, Kemp Burdette

- Dr. Knappe's study identified six other fluorochemicals that are also found in the river, some actually at higher levels than GenX. There are also other things in the river that are unregulated and are harmful.
 - There are a number of ways harmful compounds get into our water.

UNCW Marine Biology Professor, Dr. Lawrence Cahoon

- The risk of most of these cancer-causing agents- and it is still unclear if GenX is a cancer-causing agent, but it looks that way- but a lot of these other compounds that are a part of the cocktail haven't been tested at all. The longer you are exposed and the more stuff you are exposed to, the more likely something will happen to you.

President and CEO of the Wilmington Chamber of Commerce, Natalie English

- To date, no business has decided not to come here, but they have decided to wait and see.

Coastal advocate with the North Carolina Coastal Federation, Mike Giles

- The budget just passed by our state leaders reflects more attention to corporations and profit than the children, the workers, the senior citizens needs and the basic human right for clean water.

Assistant secretary for environment with the N.C. Department of Environmental Quality, Sheila Holman

- (Chemours) permit to discharge wastewater will not be renewed until the state's investigation is complete.
- The lab in Colorado is one that Chemours was going to be sending their samples to, so we asked them to pay for an analysis for the twelve sampling sites we are doing for each of the three weeks.

Resident attorney with Fair Shake Environmental Legal Services of Akron, Ohio, Megan M. Hunter

- Without information linking a behavior to an injury, you can't have a successful case.

Professor at N.C. State University and part of the team of researchers who evaluated the presence of GenX in the Cape Fear River, Dr. Detlef Knappe

- There were some very basic animal tests that were done in the process of approving (GenX) from the manufacture, but there were no other meaningful health data about this compound.
- Industry generates new chemicals very quickly and at a very fast rate and we know very little about these chemicals.
 - Often, they are proprietary and confidential business information.
- PFAs half-lives in humans:
 - PFOA (C8): 3.8 Years
 - PFOS: 5.4 Years
 - PFBS: 4 Months
 - GenX: ???
- Structurally, (GenX and C8) are similar enough that there should be cause for concern, but that doesn't mean that we know what their impacts on human health are right now.
- There may not be a quick medical test, but certainly there is lots of data that has been collected on other fluorochemicals in blood serum, that's the way we would know how much GenX has accumulated in the body.
- EPA hasn't regulated a new manmade chemical in over 20 years.
- GenX is only about .05% of the total fluorochemical load in the river.
- Changing out the filter medium with activated carbon would last for a short time before the carbon had to be changed out, but the other compounds that were published in the paper are essentially non-absorbable by activated carbon, and that would be the same for home systems that rely on activated carbon only.
 - RO Systems, in my opinion, would remove GenX and the other ethers very well, based on the removal of compounds that are structurally similar and similar in size.
- The one other compound we have been looking at is 1,4 Dioxane in the Cape Fear River.

Mayor of Wilmington, Bill Saffo

- What this has taught me, personally, is that we have unregulated chemicals in our rivers, not only the Cape Fear River but every river in America. We expect our regulatory agencies, DEQ and EPA that sets the water standards in this country, to identify what those chemicals are and let us know.
- There is a loophole in the (EPA permitting) system and it needs to be fixed.
- We have to get the regulatory agencies to come down here and tell us if this water is safe to drink.

Director of New Hanover County's Health Department, Phillip Tarte

- We have three wells that were tested along the Cape Fear River, that information is forthcoming and should be released soon.

New Hanover County Board of Commissioners Chairman, Woody White

- Companies discharge emerging contaminants, not just one or two. Not just GenX or C8. Many hundreds. Things we don't even know about or thought of to look at.
- The EPA has confirmed an investigation into the 2009 order (Chemours) claimed gave them the legal authority to do what they have been doing.
- (The EPA) is reviewing additional toxicity to see if GenX has made its way into the water as a result of a vinyl producing process or making and selling it to put in frying pans.

Senior researcher with the Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations, based in Amsterdam, Dr. Joseph Wilde-Ramsing

- Why are the environmental authorities (in the Netherlands) acting with more rigor than they have been here so far? One is simply related to the amount of funding that is available for the authority there and the seriousness with which they go about and are enabled to do their jobs.
- If you are going to be putting something into a river and people are going to be drinking it, you should be telling them about it.
 - You can't use the lack of scientific certainty about its impacts to justify not doing anything or not telling people about it.