

To: The Editor

Area citizens representing "Preserve our North Carolina Lakes Community" are holding an emergency meeting at the Vance Co. Commissioner's Room, 122 Young St., Henderson, NC on Thursday, April 23 at 6:00 pm to discuss actions to be taken to stop local officials from signing an agreement that would permanently send massive amounts of water from Kerr Lake to the Neuse and Tar Rivers.

- The Kerr Lake Regional Water System, including the City of Henderson and Vance and Warren County Commissioners, are seeking certification from the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to transfer ten additional million gallons of water per day (MGD) from Kerr Lake Reservoir in order to "meet the system's projected water demands."
- According to Henderson City Councilman Mike Inscoe, the water transfer is "vital to rural communities for future growth and economic prosperity." Which rural communities is he talking about, those outside cities such as Raleigh and Louisburg?
- Upon closer examination of the potential impacts of such a water transfer, it is not the water that needs to be diverted. Rather, it is the direction of economic development that needs to be diverted to where the water already is, here in the Kerr Lake region. On what basis then can local Henderson, Vance and Warren officials honestly justify sending the most valuable resource of this "economically distressed" Tier 1 area -- our precious water supply -- to "economically prosperous" Tier 2 and 3 counties hungry for growth and economic development?
- The Neuse River begins in a pond in Durham County and flows into Falls Lake which supplies water to a half million people in Raleigh and six other municipalities in eastern Wake County: Garner, Knightdale, Rolesville, Wake Forest, Wendell and Zebulon. Falls Lake has water quality problems. The Neuse River Basin is one of the fastest growing river basins in the country. The Tar River provides water to Franklin County and Louisburg.
- If you don't think there could be a likely giant sucking sound from the water transfer and that the water removal would be only "a drop in the bucket," then you don't know where the Neuse and Tar Rivers flow and that Raleigh is projected to run out of water in 20 years.
- If you don't think that sucking sound, combined with global warmings' inevitable droughts, could turn Kerr Lake's shoreline into mudflats and concentrate pollutants that would affect wildlife and water quality, then you've not seen the look of western over-drained, dried-up lakes.
- What data and comprehensive studies, including independent assessments, have determined that the water transfer will cause "no significant environmental impact" and that "the level of Kerr Lake won't be impacted?" Whose drought and economic development models have been used in these studies? Why have local officials not insisted on a comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to make a sound interbasin transfer decision instead of basing the decision on an abbreviated Environmental Assessment (EA), which, according to the EPA, is only a preliminary step to an EIS concerning projects that may have a significant environmental impact? Do Tier 1 "distressed" counties officials believe that their constituents

don't rate the unabridged truth about the potential impacts of the basin transfer? Do they think we don't have equal rights to information?

- According to the EPA, "Ensuring environmental justice means not only protecting human health and the environment for everyone, but also ensuring that all people are treated fairly and given the opportunity to participate meaningfully in the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies."
- **The public hearing notification process has not been transparent or just; therefore, citizens are calling on officials to extend the April 30 public comment deadline indefinitely so that a series of public hearings can allow for a public information campaign, a proper Environmental Impact Statement to be discussed and drafted, and so that stakeholders who have the most to lose can be partners in the decision-making process.**
- The people of this region have the right and responsibility to protect their own natural resources and economic interests, and their sentiment should determine the region's future, not a handful of political and government officials. According to Abraham Lincoln, "In this and like communities, public sentiment is everything. With public sentiment, nothing can fail; without it, nothing can succeed."

Please be part of the sentiment that helps protect our region's interests. Convince your friends, families, and colleagues to join you at Thursday's meeting. Meanwhile, contact your local officials by phone, email, text, tweet, and in person. Tell them to cancel the interbasin public notice deadline and to let citizens weigh in at future, well-publicized public hearings. Go to: ej-pp.org for the contact list.

Sincerely,

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