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Millis Issues Statement on Environmental Review Commission Meeting

Raleigh, N.C. - North Carolina House Representative Chris Millis (R-Pender) released a statement Thursday on the Environmental Review Commission's findings this week about the unlawful discharge of "GenX" into the Cape Fear River.

"The Environmental Review Commission (ERC) took action on Wednesday afternoon to begin the process of addressing the cocktail of chemical compounds that were discovered by academia in the Lower Cape Fear River Basin.

It was appalling to review the timeline of events and hear the testimony concerning Chemours illegally discharging chemicals into our state waters.

It was clear from the hearing that Chemours did not list the toxic chemicals, loosely called GenX, on their state permit and do not appear to have adequately disclosed their discharge in their applications – a requirement under the Clean Water Act.

Even after the Environmental Review Commission's first meeting on the matter, I remain extremely concerned about a number of issues:

* To this day the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality has yet to issue a Notice of Violation (NOV) to the entity that has polluted our water. It is my understanding that while Chemours may have been permitted to produce the chemicals in question, they were not permitted to discharge those chemicals into the Cape Fear River. Due to this understanding, an NOV seems in order and overdue.

* The emphasis of Chemours voluntarily ceasing to discharge pollutants into our water may appear as a positive step, but it must be understood that the discharge should never have happened in the first place. If the administration continues to refrain from issuing an NOV, an injunction, or any other legal action to the polluter, then for us citizens there is practically nothing preventing the continued discharge of more pollutants in our water. A polluter

voluntarily ceasing to break the law is completely insufficient for the protection of public health. The administration's existing enforcement powers must be employed.

* While the local utilities in the Cape Fear region may move to immediately address the clean-up of our polluted water, it must not be lost on the administration that the responsible party is the polluter, not the water utility, ratepayers and taxpayers, who must bear the ultimate cost."

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