



CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

March 4, 2016

The Honorable Donald R. van der Vaart  
Secretary, North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality  
217 West Jones Street  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27603

Dear Secretary van der Vaart:

I write to respectfully request an update from the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ) regarding your efforts to ensure safe drinking water in our state. In light of the Dan River Coal Ash spill that polluted our waterways in 2014, and the fact that many of the water systems in my district last had sanitary surveys more than four years ago, we must ensure public trust in the water. We must make sure that no North Carolina community faces the same devastating water pollution that occurred in Flint, Michigan and in other communities around the country.

We are depending on federal, state, and local governments to ensure the safety of our water. Therefore, I urge you to work closely with the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to ensure proper implementation of the Safe Drinking Water Act and the Lead and Copper Rule. State utilization of the federal Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund (DWSRF) to invest in projects to improve the infrastructure of water systems across North Carolina is also critical. To that end, I am encouraged that Governor Pat McCrory has taken a necessary first step by accepting \$119 million in federal support for clean water systems.

Improving water and sewer infrastructure has been one of my top priorities since being elected to Congress. As I work to ensure my constituents and people across North Carolina have access to clean, healthy drinking water, I respectfully request you provide responses to the following questions by April 1, 2016:

1. Many of the water systems in North Carolina's First Congressional District last had sanitary surveys multiple years ago, including surveys dating back to 2012. I respectfully request that NCDEQ complete sanitary surveys for all water systems in North Carolina's First Congressional District by the end of the calendar year.
2. How were the DWSRF-funded projects selected? What are the completion timetables for those projects? Will additional projects be announced for communities that did not receive funding?
3. How does NCDEQ plan to work with the EPA to make improvements in water system infrastructure and water quality accountability in low-income and overburdened communities?

I am committed to working with you to protect North Carolinians from the catastrophic environmental and health disaster that has harmed the citizens of Flint, Michigan. Should you have any questions, please contact Dennis Sills on my staff at 202.225.3101. I appreciate your attention to this important matter and look forward to your timely response.

Very truly yours,

G. K. Butterfield  
Member of Congress

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