

The Solution to Water Pollution

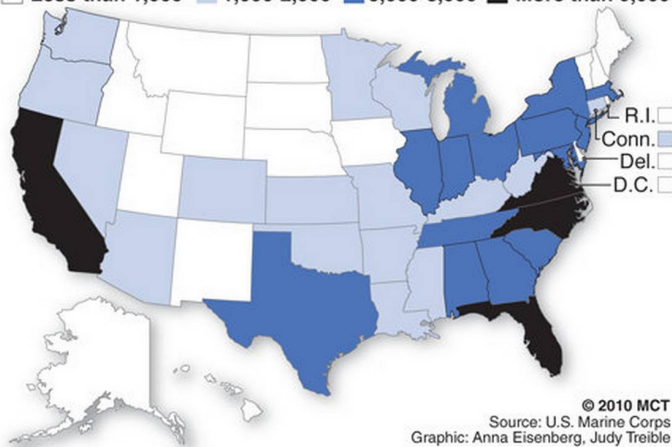
Background

NCGA House Bill 972: The Big Picture

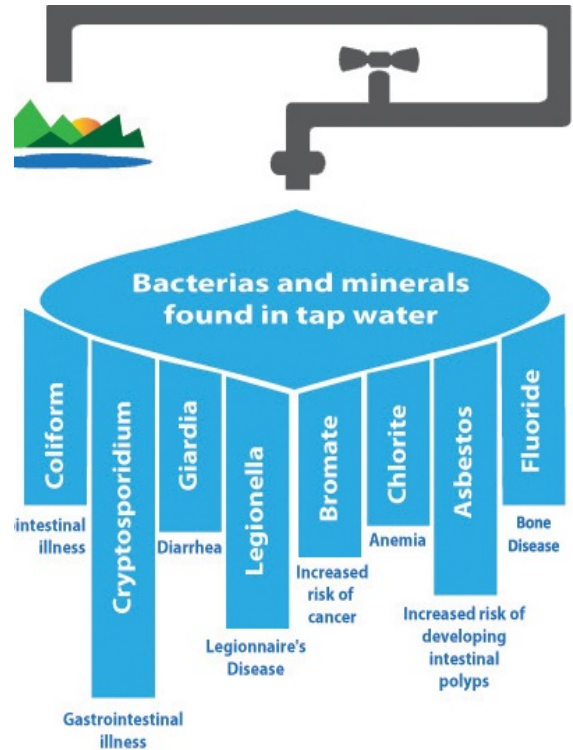
The “Water Safety Act” died in committee in May 2018 in the NC General Assembly. If passed, this bill would appropriate \$500,000 to establish a Water Health and Safety Unit in the public health division of the General Assembly and \$1.3 million to the State Department of Environmental Quality (Water Safety Act). These funds would provide the means to be able to identify all groundwater sources that contain discharge from industrial waste and would improve the current nutrient management systems in place for water treatment facilities. Lastly, it would require the NC Policy Collaboratory to release quarterly reports on the current state of any contaminants in the water (Water Safety Act). Because this bill did not get passed, many public drinking water sources still contain contaminants that are harmful to drink. Most people are not even aware that the water they drink on a daily basis contains chemicals and bacteria that could be harmful to themselves and their families.

Exposed to toxic water?

□ Less than 1,000 □ 1,000-2,999 □ 3,000-8,999 □ More than 9,000



Numbers are in terms of people



Dyas, Robert. “Always thought tap water was clean?” August 2012.

Why should you care?

Death, miscarriages, birth defects

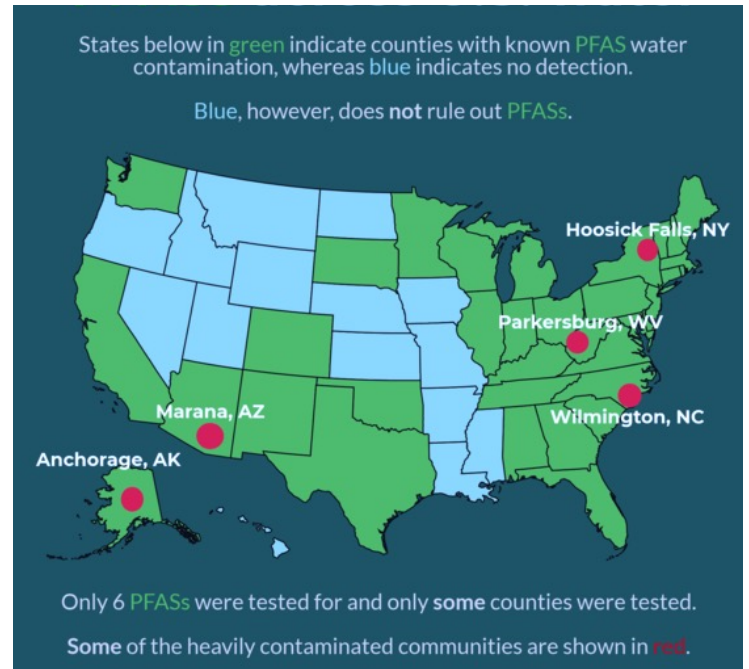
In the last 10 years, at least 63 million people have been exposed to unsafe drinking water (Philip). Even though the Safe Drinking Water Act is in place at the national level, most states are in violation of it and do not follow the regulations set by the Act; therefore it is mostly up to the states to determine the regulations for how they filter drinking water (Zheng). Over the last decade, this has become a huge issue because millions of people in the US have died, miscarried during a pregnancy, and been born with defects, all of which have been directly linked to a bacteria or chemical in their water (Philip). Specifically in North Carolina, a man-made toxic chemical called GenX is used in producing food wrappers and non-stick coating for dishes; it also infiltrates a majority of the state’s water supply and causes thousands of hospitalizations annually due to illnesses directly caused by it (Roy). If we continue to let chemicals like this go unregulated in our water, we will continue to face more consequences that could end up being deadly.



Where do we start?

Making changes in the home and the House

Even though there is already federal regulation in place to prevent public drinking water source contamination, most states do not adhere to the regulations and they instead create their own policies for how to manage the contamination of their public water sources. While some states have fairly comprehensive standards set in place to ensure clean drinking water for their consumers, most states do not regulate against a number of chemicals and bacteria that should be filtered out of the water, such as coliform, fluoride, or GenX (Philip). Even though the ultimate goal is to make the issue of water safety a federal issue, for now the most tangible method is to start at the state level. If the Water Safety Act were to get passed in the North Carolina House, it could act as a precedent for other states to follow. It would provide millions of dollars in funding to figure out which harmful chemicals are in our drinking water and provide better filtering equipment to make sure that those contaminants, especially Perfluoroalkoxy Polymer (PFA) chemicals like GenX get filtered out before we drink it.



Elijah Yetter-Bowman. "GenX: A Chemical Cocktail." 2018.

This is how we stop it.

Change starts with you

North Carolina is one of the many states in the country that is recognized by scientists as having PFAs contaminating the water. The chemical GenX falls into the category of a PFA, as well as a plethora of other man-made chemicals. North Carolina is also one of the few states that is indicated as having heavily contaminated water sources (Yetter-Bowman). If you see the presence of chemicals in your drinking water as a problem, then you have the power to enact change. The only way to solve the problem is to revise the regulations. If the Water Safety Act is advocated for and gets brought back to the NC House, there is a larger chance that it can get passed and we can begin taking steps to make North Carolina's water clean again. The only way to get clean, safe drinking water is to get the funding.

What's in your water?

A PSA on PFASs



From the team of **GenX: a Chemical Cocktail**



Elijah Yetter-Bowman. "GenX: A Chemical Cocktail." 2018.

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