

Roy Cooper, Governor



Michael S. Regan, Secretary

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Governor Cooper expands state science panel to address new or unregulated chemicals

RALEIGH – Governor Roy Cooper has expanded a state science panel to help guide state officials on ways to better protect public health and the environment from new or unregulated chemicals.

A new charter for the panel was drawn up and signed by secretaries for the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services, or DHHS, and N.C. Department of Environmental Quality, or DEQ, Friday. The panel's new charter expands the scope of the Secretary's Science Advisory Board on Toxic Air Pollutants and changes its name to the Secretaries' Science Advisory Board.

“We are taking every necessary step to protect public health and the quality of our water and air by addressing emerging chemicals of concern such as GenX and hexavalent chromium,” said DEQ Secretary Michael Regan. “This panel will provide the state with much-needed scientific expertise to confront these issues.”

“We will work with experts in epidemiology, toxicology and other disciplines to help us protect the safety and health of all North Carolinians,” said DHHS Secretary Mandy Cohen.

The panel's new charter directs it to assist DEQ and DHHS in achieving clean air, water and land. Among its new duties, the panel will perform or recommend reviews and evaluations of contaminants released to the environment; act as consultants on DEQ's determinations to regulate releases of contaminants; assist both agencies in identifying contaminants of emerging concern and help determine whether the contaminants should be studied further; assist the secretaries in providing expertise to evaluate the human and environmental impacts of exposure to hazardous contaminants; and provide input to DHHS as the agency establishes health goals for emerging contaminants.

The new charter expands the board from eight to 11 voting members. All members are appointed by the DEQ and DHHS secretaries. Members will come from academic institutions, the public and private sectors, and independent research facilities. Members will include scientists, the state epidemiologist or state health director, two toxicologists, a physician, a local health director with experience in environmental health and epidemiology.

The secretaries for DEQ and DHHS plan to appoint members, including a chairman of the panel, soon. The board will meet at least six times a year.

Scientific experts with DEQ and the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services will work together with the panel as it evaluates new health data.

This science panel will conduct business in an open forum to allow for public input as they are considering the latest research and will offer much-needed peer review of available scientific data.

Read the new charter for the [science panel](#) or at this [link](#).

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