



MECKLENBURG COUNTY *- AIR QUALITY COMMISSION -*

August 7, 2024

CHAIR'S MESSAGE

Purpose.

Article 1 of the Charter of the Mecklenburg County Air Quality Commission (the "AQC") provides that the AQC shall submit to the Board of County Commissioners an annual report describing the activities, programs, and progress of the AQC Pursuant to that Charter provision, the AQC submits this report to the POC.

As Chair of the AQC, to introduce the Report, I would like to bring the following to the attention of the Board.

AQC Is Diverse, Active and Engaged

The AQC is now a commission of representative citizen volunteers from throughout the county, with a broad range of backgrounds and experiences. The current AQC is more engaged with Mecklenburg County Air Quality and the communities of the County than any AQC of which I have been a part. The AQC has met in hybrid format through the past year, but in person attendance has been very strong at each meeting.

Mecklenburg County Meets All Health-Based Air Quality Standards.

Monitoring data from the past year show that air quality in Mecklenburg County continues to meet federal health-based standards for all criteria pollutants. Air quality has remained good despite the rapid growth of County population. In particular, we would note continued compliance with the strengthened ozone standard. Mecklenburg County residents did not experience any days in the past year where air quality was considered unhealthy for the general population.

AQC and Air Quality Staff Continued Environmental Justice Focus.

As an outgrowth of the work groups the AQC established previously, the AQC produced a map showing areas in the County in which air quality outreach and education is most strongly needed. The AQC and County Air Quality staff have maintained focus on community activities in those mapped areas.

EPA Lowers Federal Ambient Air Quality Standard for PM 2.5

In February 2024, the USEPA lowered the national ambient air quality standard to particulate material with a diameter of 2.5 micrometers or less, from 12 micrograms per cubic meter to 9 micrograms per cubic meter. Some of the particles of concern are emitted directly from a source such as a construction site, unpaved road, field, factory, or fire. Most of the particles, though, form in the atmosphere as a result of reactions of chemicals, such as sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide, which are emitted from power plants industrial sources and automobiles. We believe that the County is currently in compliance with the new standard, but continuing compliance will require vigilance.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Peter McGrath".

Peter McGrath, Chair
Mecklenburg Air Quality Commission