

With the legalizing of permitting for wells to frack for natural gas in mid-March, 3 million North Carolina residents on private water wells must be even more aware of potential threats to their drinking water. Current threats to safe well water include thousands of underground fuel tanks across the state, hundreds of sites of chemical contamination from agriculture, dry cleaners, coal ash ponds and livestock operations. Now fracking has the potential to be an added regional source of contamination of water wells drilled near NC's very shallow, and highly fractured shale formations. At least 27 counties could experience some exploratory drilling and possible fracking if companies begin showing interest. At this time, the Division of Energy, Mining and Land Resources of the state environmental agency, DENR, reports no applications for drilling permits, and expects many months of delays before permits could be granted.

"Even after thousands of public comments last fall, calling for more protective Oil and Gas rules, and with a majority of North Carolina residents opposing fracking altogether, the NC legislature continued its rush to bring in an industry which has shown little interest, but could cause significant community disruption and bring very few jobs," says Hope Taylor, a public health scientist who directs Clean Water for North Carolina.

Much of Anson County is in the Deep River Sub Basin which has the potential for fracking. Where fracking could be a concern, residents with private wells should request 3 types of tests to cover most of the potential contaminants that could come from drilling and fracking related chemicals: 1) inorganics, 2) petroleum and 3) volatile organic compounds. Last year the legislature cut funding for the State Public Health Laboratory, which analyzes samples of well water sent to them by the county well programs. The result is a new \$74 charge to counties for each test submitted to the lab; many counties have then increased the testing prices they charge well owners. Clean Water for NC contacted all of NC's county well programs and created a table of charges for county tests and local contacts.

The increased cost could be a problem for the many lower income residents in communities that could be affected as drilling companies move in to extract gas from several areas, including the Cumberland-Marlboro Basin in southeastern NC. Lumberton, in Robeson County, is the poorest town in the nation and has experienced coal ash problems, faces possible exploratory drilling for fracking, and is the end point for the proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline; Robeson County is just one of many economically struggling counties in the region.

Ericka Faircloth, who grew up in Robeson County, points out, "Testing your private well water prior to fracking is critical, so that oil and gas companies can't say your water was already contaminated and deny responsibility if contamination occurs. In rural areas where most residents use wells, it's important to know what's in your water to protect our children from future health problems."

The Cumberland-Marlboro Basin has not been studied to the extent that the Deep River and Dan River Basins in the central and western piedmont have been, but there could be a significant risk of gas extraction if resources are found. The counties that are in the Basin are: Robeson, Cumberland, Hoke, Sampson, Scotland and Wayne. The prices for well water testing have already increased in 4 out of those 6 counties. The poorest county in the state, Scotland County, has raised the cost for most tests from about \$40 to nearly \$100. Those increased prices are a major problem for low income folks in Scotland County, where 20% of residents are in poverty. Other counties with high poverty rates are Sampson, with a rate of 17%, Robeson, with 28%, and Hoke, with 17%.

Counties in North Carolina with the highest well water test rates are Alexander (\$250), Iredell (\$250), Brunswick (\$200) and Mecklenburg (\$160). Those counties with the lowest well water test rates are Lincoln and Beaufort with tests as low as \$30, and Graham and Jackson with tests as low as \$20. Not all counties however have experienced increased charges for well testing, and some are unsure when the prices will increase.

Clean Water for North Carolina is a statewide non-profit environmental justice organization, with members in over 60 NC counties, and offices in Durham (919-401-9600) and Asheville (828-251-1291), working with community partners for safe, affordable water, and preventing harms from pollution.

**REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)
ARCHITECTURAL/ENGINEERING SERVICES
ANSON COUNTY AGRI-CIVIC CENTER**

Anson County government requests qualification proposals for the selection of firms to provide Architectural and Engineering Services for the design and construction of the Anson County Agri-Civic Center, located in Wadesboro, NC.

A complete description of the Request for Qualifications can be obtained from:

**Anson County Cooperative Extension
Attn: Janine Rywak, County Extension Director
P.O. Box 633
501 McLaurin St.
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704-694-2915**

All qualification packages will be received until 4:00 p.m. on Friday, May 15, 2015, in accordance with applicable provisions of the North Carolina General Statutes and Anson County ordinances and policies. The County reserves the right to reject any or all submittals.

*Anson County, An Equal Opportunity Employer,
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