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December 4, 2020

The Honorable Roy Asberry Cooper, III  
Governor of North Carolina  
1 East Edenton Street  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27601

Hand-delivered

Subject: Request for inclusion of Essential Water Sector Employees in no lower than Phase 2 for COVID-19 Vaccine Prioritization

Dear Governor Cooper,

The water and wastewater utility sector continuously provides critical and essential public and environmental health services to approximately 8 million North Carolinians. With over 771 major public and private utility systems, our industry serves every key hospital, government facility and most emergency response infrastructure in North Carolina, almost without exception. Having reviewed the preliminary plan, we the undersigned, representing water sector utilities and the professional associations that serve them, request prioritization of essential water and wastewater sector utility employees be included in no lower than Phase 2 for vaccination. For reference, the CDC interim recommendation for essential water and wastewater sector employees is Phase 1B.

The men and women of our industry perform 24/7 public services which frequently cannot be performed with social distancing or without risk of exposure. In addition to the CDC, the NC Division of Emergency Management and the US Department of Homeland Security have classified water sector employees as being essential. In the difficult calculus of vaccine distribution, we believe the men and women of our industry should continue to be considered essential emergency response personnel and ranked accordingly in vaccine distribution.

Our professional organizations stand ready to facilitate the information dissemination necessary to make such a prioritization a reality, ensuring critical public and environmental health services remain unimpacted by protecting its workforce through near term scheduled vaccinations. Prioritization of vaccines for our workers is critical to ensure they continue their day to day, around the clock duties and ensure that the public's needs for water and wastewater services are met.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration of this request.



[Daniel Wilson \(Dec 4, 2020 14:02 EST\)](#)

Daniel Wilson, PE, CAE, UMC  
Executive Director  
NC Rural Water Association



[Catrice R. Jones \(Dec 4, 2020 16:28 EST\)](#)

Catrice R. Jones, CAE  
Executive Director  
NC AWWA-WEA



[F. Paul Calamita \(Dec 4, 2020 14:38 EST\)](#)

Paul Calamita  
General Counsel  
NC Water Quality Association



Ken Loflin  
Chair  
NCWOA



[Shawn M Coffman \(Dec 4, 2020 15:49 EST\)](#)

Shawn Coffman  
Chair  
NCWaterWARN



[David LaFrance \(Dec 4, 2020 13:54 MST\)](#)

David LaFrance  
CEO  
American Water Works Association



[Walter Marlowe \(Dec 4, 2020 15:58 EST\)](#)

Walter Marlow, PE, CAE  
Executive Director  
Water Environment Federation

CC: Boards of Directors and Trustees, NCRWA, NC AWWA-WEA, NCWQA, NCWOA, AWWA, WEF  
Dr. Mandy K. Cohen, MD, MPH, Secretary, NC Department of Health and Human Services  
Michael A. Sprayberry, Director, North Carolina Emergency Management