

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 15, 2024

Contact: Misty Gibbs, PIO, Northampton County Health Department

Phone: 252-534-5841

The Virginia Department of Health has issued a recreational swimming and fish consumption advisory until further notice for surface waters, including the Meherrin and Roanoke rivers, that extend to the North Carolina-Virginia border after a fire at a chemical storage facility in South Hill, Virginia on July 6, 2024.

The Northampton County Health Department (NCHD) has been in contact with the appropriate local, North Carolina and Virginia authorities monitoring the progress of this event for any potential impact to Northampton County. Area drinking water utility suppliers have been notified of the issue, and out of an abundance of caution, continue to test all drinking water for Northampton County. The North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ) and Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VDEQ) are testing the affected waterways routinely and reporting those results to NCHD and our partner agencies. Virginia DEQ reports that the chemical plume is moving slowly, and that as of July 15, 2024, there is no indication that the chemical plume has made its way to Lake Gaston or any other waterway in Northampton County, NC.

The NC DHHS Communicable Disease Branch has begun syndromic surveillance of Warren, Halifax, and Northampton County hospitals. This effort, mirroring Virginia's Department of Health, is focusing on tracking symptoms including eye and skin irritation, allergic skin reactions, drowsiness or dizziness, respiratory irritation, nausea, and loss of consciousness reported in emergency departments. If you have been in the affected waterways and experience these symptoms, please seek medical care and notify your practitioner of the waterbody exposure.

If you notice any plumes, sheens, or fish kills in these waterways avoid coming into contact with these waters and report these conditions to 1-877-623-6748.

Northampton County Health Department will continue to update citizens as the incident progresses.

For more information related to the incident please visit www.deq.virginia.gov or scan the QR code below.

