

**Summit - America's Healthcare Policy:
Through the Lens of Environmental Health**

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NC Biotech Center - Research Triangle Park, NC

**“The Lack of Basic Amenities as Indicators of Health Disparities
in Low-Income Minority Communities and Tribal Areas”**

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Background Information Related to Environmental Health

- 1) Founding board chair of WERA in 1995 as 501©-3 non-profit.
- 2) Community Perspective Member of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's National Environmental Justice Advisory Council 2007-10:
 - Wrote "Community Facilitated Strategies" Section of Goods Movement Recommendations. WERA Designated as EPA Prototype for "Community Facilitated Strategies" July 2010.
 - Workgroup on Environment Justice Strategic Enforcement Assessment Tool (EJ-SEAT) Recommendations.
 - Workgroup on State Environmental Justice Cooperative Agreement (SEJCA) Recommendations.
 - Raised CAFOs to EPA's primary environmental hazards list.
- 3) Designed "Community-Owned and Managed Research" Model and Community Principal Investigator of four COMR Research Projects Funding by EPA, NIEHS, Z. Smith Reynolds, UNC-CH, NGAAP
- 4) EPA OEJ Environmental Justice Achievement Awardee – 2008

Background Information Related to Environmental Health



EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson and Omega Wilson



Omega Wilson receiving the EPA National Environmental Justice Achievement Award - 2008

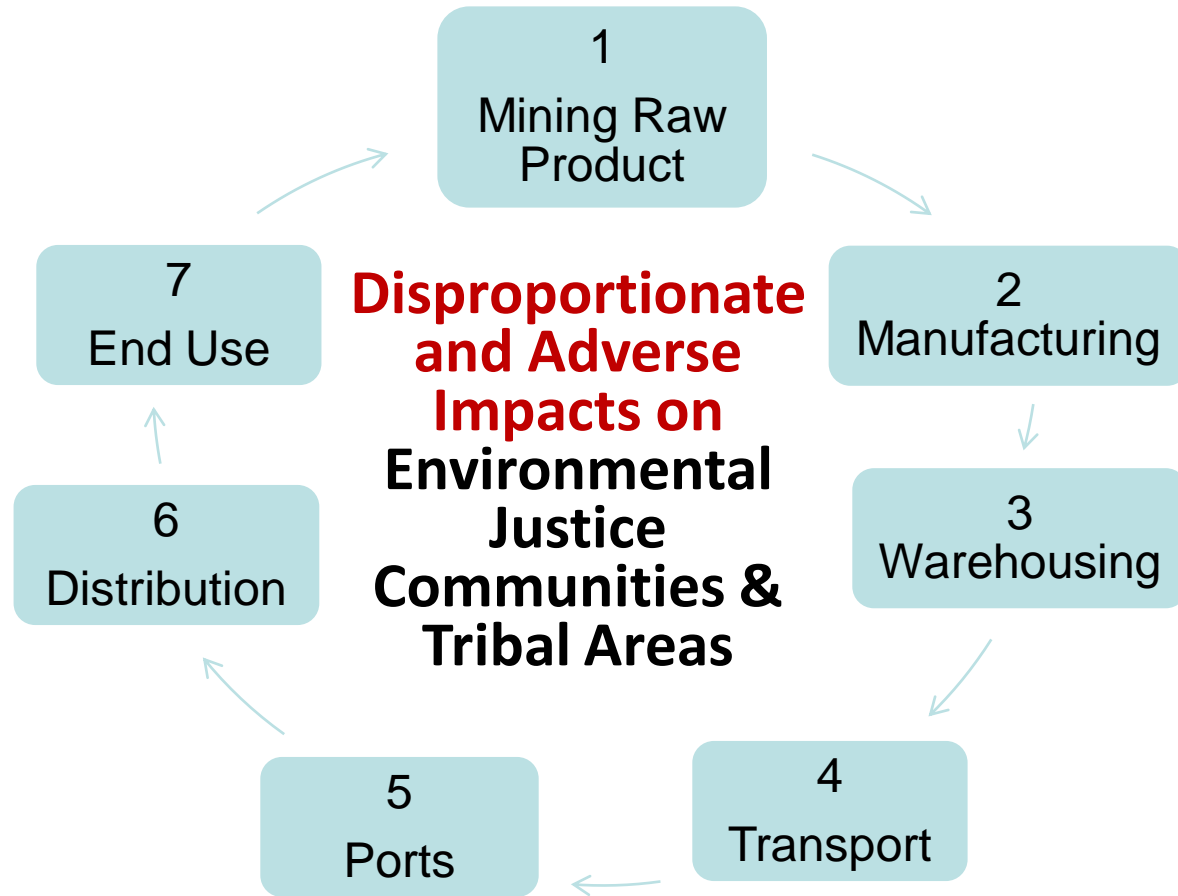
THE QUESTION: How do we establish local/state collaborative partnerships to insure the N.C. General Assembly formally adopted environmental assurance, compliance, and enforcement of federal laws for the protection of N.C. residents' health and quality of life?

“The Lack of Basic Amenities as Indicators of Health Disparities in Low-Income Minority Communities and Tribal Areas”

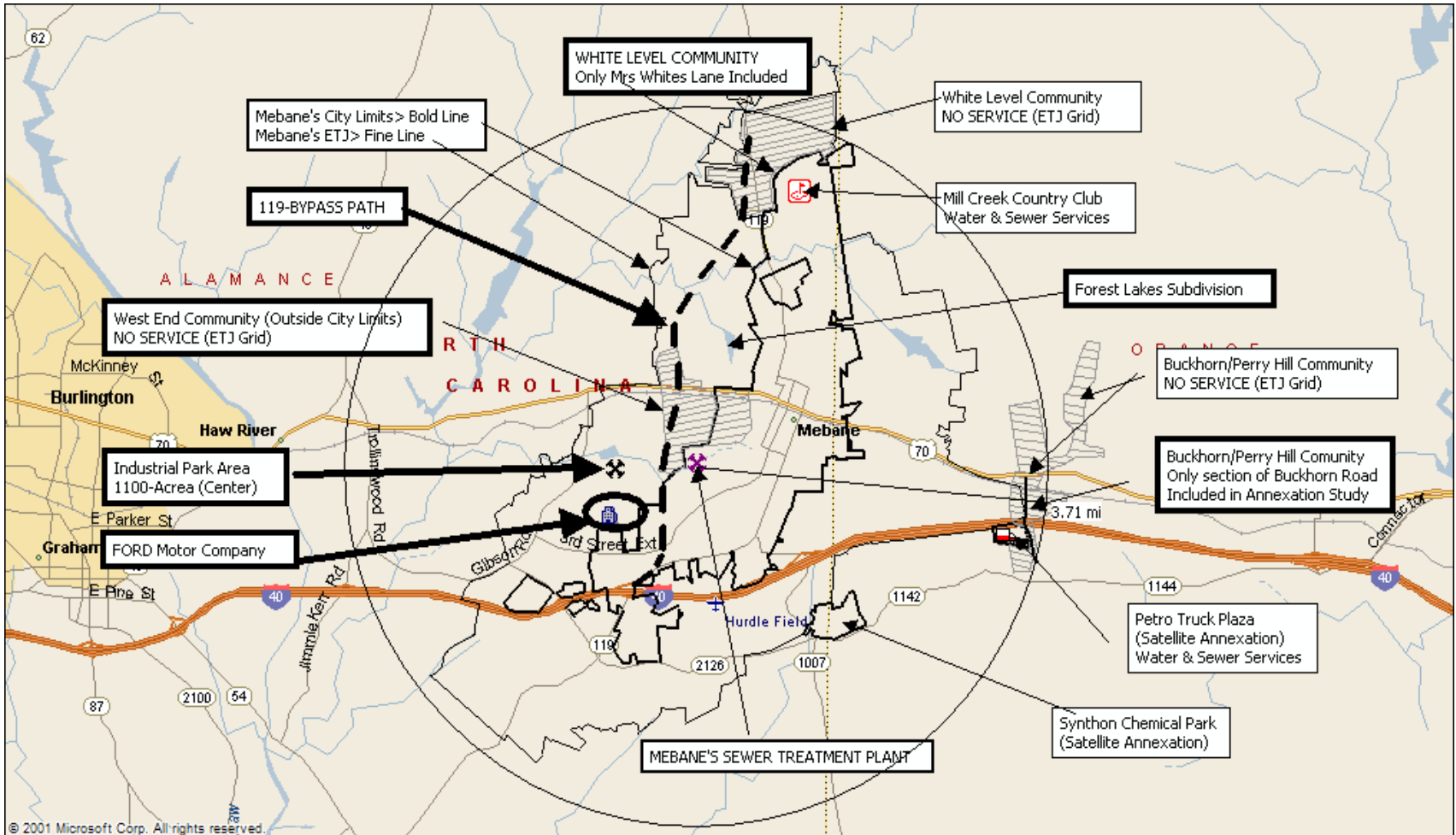
The Problem: Lack of Basic Public Health Amenities:

- 1. Clean air, safe drinking water, toxic free soil, freedom from exposure to pollutants, and supporting infrastructure for human & solid waste disposal, and storm-water management.**
2. Recent research shows that minorities are more likely than whites to live in areas with high pollution, limited access to safe drinking water or poor sewer service, and poor air quality, and high diesel emissions from goods movement (air, rail, marine ports & highways).
3. Chronic and crisis levels of impaired basic public health amenities exacerbates human exposure and diminished cause/effect determination of hazards.

USEPA Goods Movement: Community Facilitated Strategies



NCDOT 119-Bypass/Overpass Corridor Through West End & White Level Communities for 16-years Without Input



Basic Amenities Issues Addressed by WERA in: Buckhorn / Perry Hill , West End, and White Level Communities

1. 27-mile 119-bypass/interstate through communities
2. Benzene and xylenes that leaked from underground storage tanks that threatens well water and groundwater supply
3. Failing on-site septic systems near private unregulated drinking water wells
4. Surface water contamination up to 300 times the USEPA Maximum Contaminant Limit (MCL) for fecal coliforms, *E. coli*, and Enterococci.
5. Housing construction on a 8-acre landfill with arsenic, industrial solid waste, methane, at two stream in Mebane's city limits without corrective actions.

WERA Accessing Basic Amenities via Existing Federal Laws

Environmental Protection Agency Statutes:

- Safe Drinking Water Act
- Clean Water Act
- Clean Air Act
- Solid Waste Disposal Act
- Toxic Substances Control Act

WERA USEPA CPS Lessons Learned - May 15, 2006

Buckhorn / Perry Hill , West End, and White Level Communities

Community Preservation: Housing & Historic Sites

WERA filed a complaint with the U.S. Department of Justice in 1999 under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act -1964 and 1994-Environmental Justice Executive Order 12898 that put 119-bypass construction (Over \$100-Million) on moratorium for mitigation procedures.



NCDOT engineers point out benefits of the 119-bypass. West End and White Level residents see nothing but destruction for them (3-30-06).

Basic Amenities Needed

Buckhorn / Perry Hill , West End, and White Level Communities

Comparable Communities in N.C. & Southeast



WERA's OEJ-EPA Small Grant Study detected human waste above EPA statutes in streams and a ruptured sewer collection line in Mebane city limits at the landfill in West End-2002.



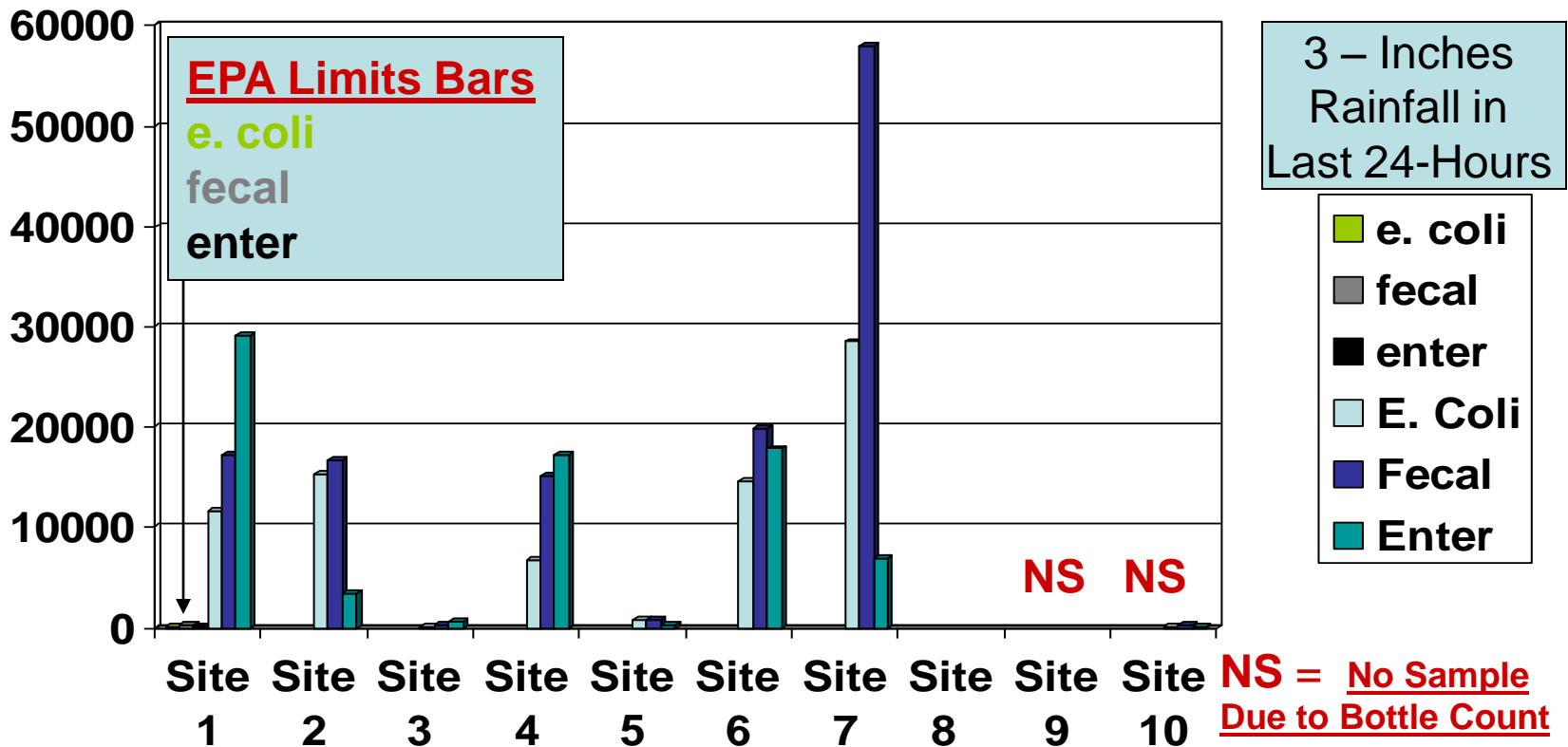
Results: Three visible trunk line failures were repaired by Mebane's Public Works Department after WERA filed a petition at the EPA Office of Environmental Justice in 2003.

WERA / EXPORT Research Project: March - April 2005

Surface Water Sample Sites (Third Round):

Buckhorn / Perry Hill , West End, White Level Communities

USEPA Guideline - **Limits** (1986) and Center for Disease Control (2000):
 E. Coli = **126** / 100ml; Fecal Coliforms = **200** / 100ml; Enterococci = **33** / 100ml



Microbiological Water Quality for Recreational Freshwater (e.g. lakes, ponds)

WERA's USEPA Collaborative Partnerships for Corrective Actions & Hazards Removal / Reduction

Stabilization: First-Time Sewer Installation

Mebane sewer block grants for 91 houses in West End with outhouses, straight-line black water, and 50-to-100 percent failing rate of on-site backyard septic systems, without upgrading water services.



Mebane City Planner and Storm-water Management engineer report impact of failed septic systems on crisis level contamination in local streams 4-1-06

WERA's USEPA Collaborative Partnerships for Corrective Actions & Hazards Removal / Reduction

Stopped Housing Development on Landfill with Arsenic Contamination

Commencement of testing of landfill where WERA and residents were instrumental in stopping housing construction.



Mebane permitted housing construction on landfill in 2000. Owner capped 8-acre landfill without a permit (2001) and requested approval for more housing construction in 2005. Outcry from residents helped stop further construction.

WERA's USEPA Collaborative Partnerships for Corrective Actions & Hazards Removal / Reduction

First Time Paving of Dirt Streets

Commencement of NCDOT widening and paving of Allen Baynes road, which was sited for destruction by 119-bypass/overpass.



After 15 years, widening & ditching for paving started May 1, 2006>>>CLEAN AIR!!

Residents and the Masonic Temple seek years without destruction by 119-bypass's one mile overpass (5-1-06).

WERA's USEPA Collaborative Partnerships for Corrective Actions & Hazards Removal / Reduction

Reduction Cancer and Disease Causing Hazards



Removal of 20,000 gallon
Underground Storage
Tanks Leaking Cancer
Causing Petroleum 1/15/08



Repair of City of Mebane
Sewer and Water lines
leaking into Stream at
City Park (Feb. 2007)

How-to Questions for Corrective Actions:

- 1) Educate N.C. State General Assembly and other governments to adopt and comply with federal inter-agency policies to reduce environmental pollution and health disparities?
- 2) Identify lawmakers who would sponsor a collaborative bill for assurance, compliance, and enforcement under federal statutes including the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA)?
- 3) Address state “*primacy*” issues as barriers to funding for corrective actions for low-income, minority, and Native American areas with adverse & disproportionate environmental impacts?
- 4) Locate funds to sustain WERA a working national model and “prototype” of USEPA’s “Community Facilitated Strategies” (CFS) related to environmental impacts and goods movement corridors in low-income minority communities and tribal areas?

Very Appreciative of Your Time and Attention!