

REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION

HENDERSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

MEETING DATE: June 18, 2025

SUBJECT: NC Department of Environmental Quality Water and/or Wastewater Study Participation

PRESENTER: Autumn Radcliff, Planning Director
Timothy Baldwin, PE, DEQ

ATTACHMENTS: 1. Project Scope

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

The NC Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is considering conducting a planning study focused on water and/or wastewater systems for the Hickory Nut Gorge, which includes the Town of Lake Lure, Village of Chimney Rock, and the unincorporated areas of Rutherford and Henderson Counties. This study will explore the potential of regionalization for the Town of Lake Lure and the village of Chimney Rock and provide options for individual septic system repairs and small clustered community septic systems in Henderson County.

Although Henderson County may not extend sewer services across the county boundary, the County may be interested in participating in DEQ's study to examine wastewater options and septic system repairs, which could help many rural property owners following the damage created by Hurricane Helene that could provide additional funding opportunities.

Mr. Timothy Baldwin, PE with DEQ's Viable Utilities Unit, Division of Water Infrastructure, will be available to discuss how the study could assist Henderson County residents and provide the Board the opportunity to determine its project scope and objectives for the study outcome (see attached). County staff would be participating throughout the study process. The study is funded through state grant funds and no local match is required. There are also no obligations related to the results of the study.

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:

The Board is requested to consider participating in the DEQ study. If participation in the study is approved, a letter of participation is requested.

Suggested Motion:

I move that the Board approve the County's participation in the DEQ study to consider septic system repair options in Henderson County's portion of the Hickory Nut Gorge and authorize the County Manager to submit a letter of participation for the grant request.

**North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Grant
Hickory Nut Gorge Water and/Wastewater Study
Henderson County Project Scope**

Henderson County is interested in investigating the following items:

- Septic system repair program
 - Methods of possible assistance to failing onsite systems, such as a septic system repair program or clustered community septic system options
- Coordinated upgrades to communications and GIS mapping data between the various jurisdictions
- Emergency cooperation and mutual aid agreements
- Shared staffing and possibly operations of facilities
- Shared equipment (ex., generators and pumps), inventory, contracted services (ex. lab testing), and possibly emergency preparedness facilities
- Possible creation of an authority or other way of providing broad water, wastewater, and stormwater oversight for the Hickory Nut Gorge area
- Flow calculation estimations for currently unsewered developed areas, as well as proposed developments, within the watershed or the possible Hickory Nut Gorge Authority area