



Charlotte Interbasin Transfer Request

**May 8, 2024, Public Input Meeting (5:30pm)
Ridgeview Branch Library, 706 1st Street NW, Hickory, NC**

Issue: Charlotte Water filed a notice of its intent to request an increase from 33 million gallons per day (MGD) to 63 MGD regarding the water it transfers from the Catawba River Basin to the Rocky River Basin, a tributary of the Yadkin/Pee Dee River.

History: Interbasin transfers (IBTs) are regulated and approved by the state through the Environmental Management Commission within the NC Department of Environmental Quality. In 2002, Charlotte Water received approval to transfer 33 MGD from the Catawba River to the Rocky River Basin. In 2005, Concord and Kannapolis requested 36 MGD from the Catawba River Basin to the Rocky River Basin. The compromise approved in 2007 allows for 10 million gallons per day from the Catawba, but reduces that number during drought. This occurred after extensive public debate and the state law was amended to further define the interbasin transfer approval process.

Key Points:

- The local governments in our region are concerned about the negative impacts of Charlotte's request to transfer additional water from the Catawba River Basin into the Rocky River which is part of the Yadkin River Basin.
- Like all rivers, the Catawba River is a limited resource that is vital to life and economic growth.
- IBTs of this magnitude subsidize growth in other areas using the limited resources of the Catawba River.
- The NC Environmental Management Commission approved a Charlotte requested IBT in 2002 for 33 million gallons per day and approved another IBT in 2007 for 10 million gallons per day for Concord and Kannapolis.
- These existing IBT approvals and the new request of 30 million gallons from Charlotte would total more than 73 million gallons of water per day.
- We are very concerned the proposed transfer will limit the amount of water available for withdraw to support growth in our area due to regulation limits under state and federal laws.
- Charlotte should implement land use and infrastructure policies in a sustainable manner to avoid such large IBTs.
- The Catawba Wateree Water Management Group was established a number of years ago to coordinate resources and make plans to enhance the river basin.

- Charlotte only recently informed the Catawba Wateree Water Management Group of its intentions regarding this very large IBT increase.
- The Resource Management Group is actively working its water supply master plan for the entire river basin. Charlotte should wait until that process is complete.
- Existing projections, by the Catawba Wateree Water Management Group, for net water withdrawals already show substantial increases in water supply demand for the Catawba River Basin over the next 30 years. This Charlotte IBT request will further stress this limited resource.
- A few years ago, we experienced severe drought conditions that depleted water levels to a point that nearly interrupted public drinking water supplies. This IBT will exacerbate that issue with the next drought.
- We are also concerned about the negative impact of increasing water pollutant concentrations with an IBT of this magnitude that would add further degradation of an already stressed ecosystem.
- Increased pollutant concentrations resulting from this IBT will indirectly cause an increase in wastewater treatment costs for local governments along the river.
- Charlotte has provided very limited information about their request, the alternatives they have considered, and the cost of those alternatives to their forthcoming IBT application.
- Previous studies for the Catawba River called for the elimination of interbasin transfers as a strategy to protect the river and water supplies during drought conditions. This request would further expose communities in the Catawba River Basin to water shortages during drought conditions.
- The 2015 Water Supply Master Plan for the Catawba River projected Charlotte's current IBT would be sufficient through 2065 and yet another request is apparently forthcoming.
- Charlotte should not increase its IBT for its growth needs over the next 30 years but should instead use that time to implement water infrastructure and policies to eliminate its current IBT certificate issued in 2002.
- An IBT should be a temporary measure to accommodate growth and not a permanent solution.
- In summary, our region should not be forced to give up its potential growth opportunities to subsidize Charlotte growth with our water resources.

