



November 28, 2012

To: The Town of Pittsboro,  
Mayor Randy Voller and the Pittsboro Board of Commissioners

**Subject:** Letter of Support for Town of Pittsboro's Request to Review Robeson Creek Discharge

Dear Mayor Voller and Town of Pittsboro Board of Commissioners:

The Haw River Assembly supports your request to the NC Department of Natural Resources to review the dual discharge requirements defined in the approved permit renewal and modification. We agree with your proposal to initiate a watershed-based study to evaluate the potential to eliminate or modify the dual-discharge requirement and increase the Town of Pittsboro's discharge to Robeson Creek from 0.75 mgd to a level that is sustainable for the ecological function of Robeson Creek.

We are aware that improvements to the Robeson Creek Watershed and the Town's need to meet the Jordan Lake TMDL requirements underpin any changes to the existing WWTP permit for Pittsboro. We believe there is time and new opportunity to review this dual discharge permit that will result in a less expensive but more effective approach to Pittsboro's wastewater effluent. Based on current population projections and the wastewater treatment capacity for Pittsboro it appears that there is ample time to review better options for water quality and ecosystem health with a new look at what is possible.

We strongly support the consideration of a modified permit that would significantly reduce the risk to water quality, aquatic life and recreational use in the Haw River at the Highway 64 site created by the 2.47 mgd of treated wastewater that was approved in the dual discharge permit renewal and modification on June 2, 2011. This stretch of river has important Significant Natural Areas, and rare and endangered species incidences and habitat. It is at the public access point for the Lower Haw River State Natural Area which is popular for paddling, fishing, tubing and other recreation. It is only a mile upstream of the impounded waters for Jordan Lake, which is the focus of efforts to reduce nutrient pollution. Eliminating this Haw River discharge from the existing permit, while providing sustainable water quality and ecosystem health in Robeson Creek, would be a win-win for all.

The Town of Pittsboro has a tremendous opportunity to explore the use of proven innovative approaches to treat and reuse wastewater that would otherwise be discharged into the Haw River. This reuse quality water could be used throughout their ETJ including proposed new development. Irrigation reuse and more traditional land application would help restore the local hydrologic cycle which has been impacted by development, increased water withdrawals, and direct discharges of treated wastewater effluent into already impaired surface waters.

These and other options could be explored in a more cost-effective and holistic manner to mitigate the adverse impacts of excessive nutrient loading, restore the designated uses of Robeson Creek, and accommodate an increased discharge to Robeson Creek from the Pittsboro WWTP.

The Haw River Assembly would like to work with the Town of Pittsboro and other stakeholders to identify opportunities to preserve, protect, and restore the health and condition of Robeson Creek Watershed and receiving streams through innovative and more cost-effective approaches. We support your proposal to NC DENR for this watershed-based study and to explore better options for water quality and ecological health.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Elaine Chiosso".

Elaine Chiosso  
Haw Riverkeeper