

Press Release from the Southern Environmental Law Center

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**Groups Go to Court to Protect Haw River & Jordan Lake from
Impacts of Massive Chatham Park Development in Pittsboro**
Drinking Water Reservoir for Over 300,000 Triangle Residents Downstream of Development

CHAPEL HILL, N.C.--On behalf of the Haw River Assembly, the Southern Environmental Law Center today filed a motion to intervene with the Office of Administrative Hearings in proceedings over whether the small Town of Pittsboro will honor its commitments to protect the Haw River and Jordan Lake, a drinking water reservoir for over 300,000 Triangle residents, from the impacts of a massive new 55,000 person development known as Chatham Park.

“Adding 55,000 new residents to a town of 4000 people and developing over 7000 acres will result in more pollution into nearby streams, the Haw River, and into Jordan Lake, the drinking water source for 300,000 people,” said Brooks Rainey Pearson, an attorney at the Southern Environmental Law Center which is representing the Haw River Assembly in the legal proceedings. “Pittsboro should honor its commitment to protect our waterways. Dodging responsibility is unacceptable when communities downstream will suffer from this massive development’s pollution.”

Chatham Park investors and the Town of Pittsboro sued the N.C. Department of Environmental Quality in the OAH after the agency notified the town of failures to fulfill commitments made in Pittsboro’s permit application to expand its wastewater treatment plant to accommodate new development. In its permit application, Pittsboro committed to conservation measures and stormwater mitigation strategies that would help offset the dramatic increase in paved surface areas from the addition of 23-million square feet of commercial space and 27,570 residential dwelling units on the banks of the Haw River.

“The Haw River Assembly wants to make sure the river and Jordan Lake are protected from the harm of such a massive development located directly on the banks of the Haw River.” said Elaine Chiosso, executive director of the Haw River Assembly.

The NC DEQ letter to the Town of Pittsboro on May 3, 2018 notified Pittsboro that it was expected to fulfill the commitments in its permit to prevent harm to Haw River, or face re-opening of its permit. Chatham Park and the Town of Pittsboro responded by petitioning for contested case hearings at the Office of Administrative Hearings.

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Editor’s Note:

More information and documents about this issue can be found on the Haw River Assembly webpage at <http://hawriver.org/river-issues/chatham-park/>

About the Southern Environmental Law Center

For more than 30 years, the Southern Environmental Law Center has used the power of the law to champion the environment of the Southeast. With over 70 attorneys and nine offices across the region, SELC is widely recognized as the Southeast’s foremost environmental organization and regional leader. SELC works on a full range of environmental issues to protect our natural resources and the health and well-being of all the people in our region. www.SouthernEnvironment.org