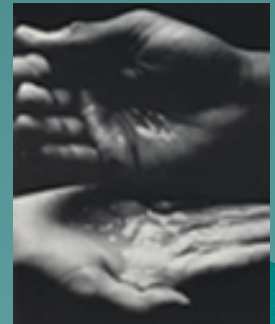



Drinking Water: more than a sip of caution

Hope Taylor-Guevara
Clean Water for NC

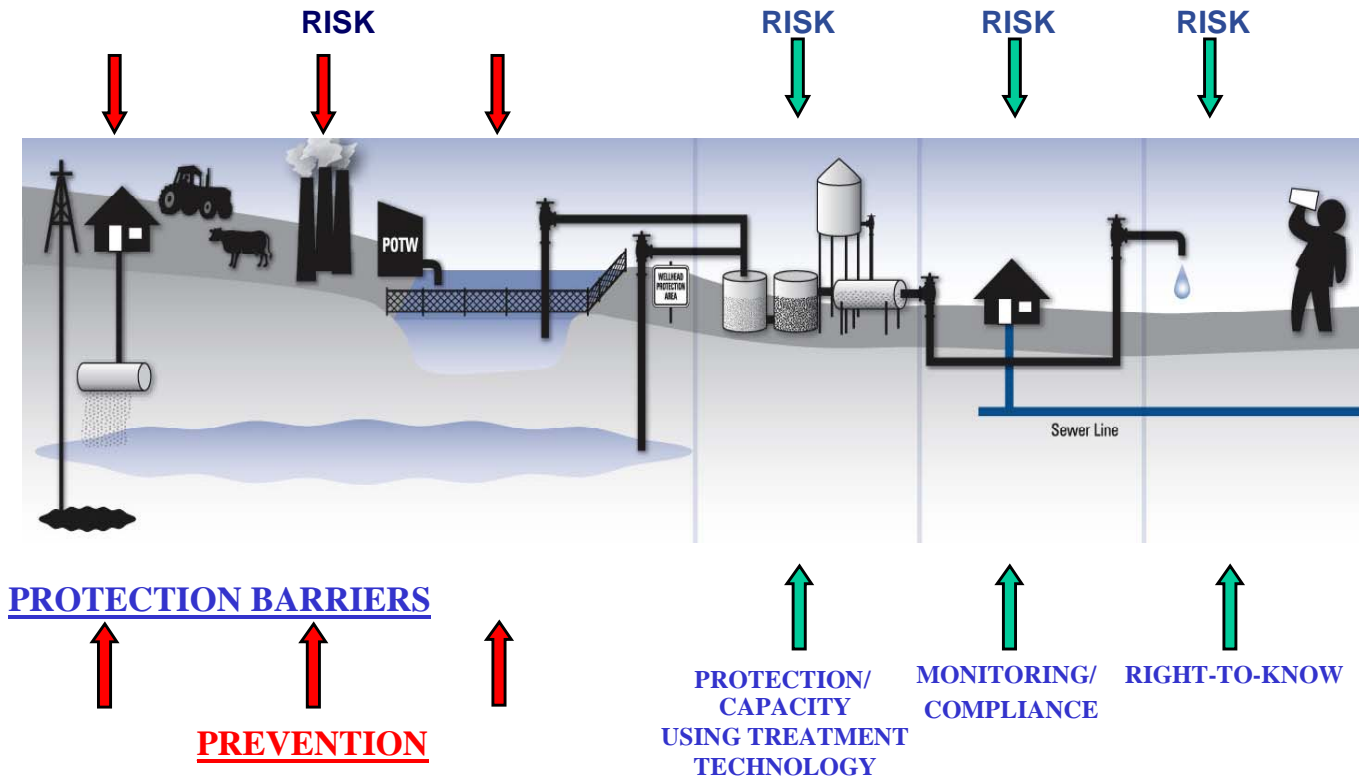


Safe Drinking Water Act—study in Precautionary Action (with holes)

- ◆ Drinking Water Standard Setting
 - ◆ Water Supply Treatment and Filtration
 - ◆ Drinking Water Monitoring; and
 - ◆ Community Involvement and Awareness
- 
- A stylized silhouette of a mountain range in shades of teal, located in the bottom right corner of the slide.

Multiple Barrier Approach

SAFE DRINKING WATER ACT
PROTECTING AMERICA'S PUBLIC HEALTH
MULTIPLE RISKS REQUIRE MULTIPLE BARRIERS



1996 SDWA Amendments layer on more caution

provisions that information be shared
with the public about drinking water,
including:

- ◆ Right to Know (RTK) Reports--
Also known as Consumer Confidence or
Water Quality Reports
- ◆ Public Notification Rule
- ◆ Source Water Assessments

Now for those “holes”

- ◆ “Structural” holes due to the scope of the problem—SDWA covers public systems >25 people
- ◆ Standard setting very political, strong push back on economic feasibility, not purely health based
- ◆ “Highest expectation” barriers (source water protection) are unenforceable and largely unfunded

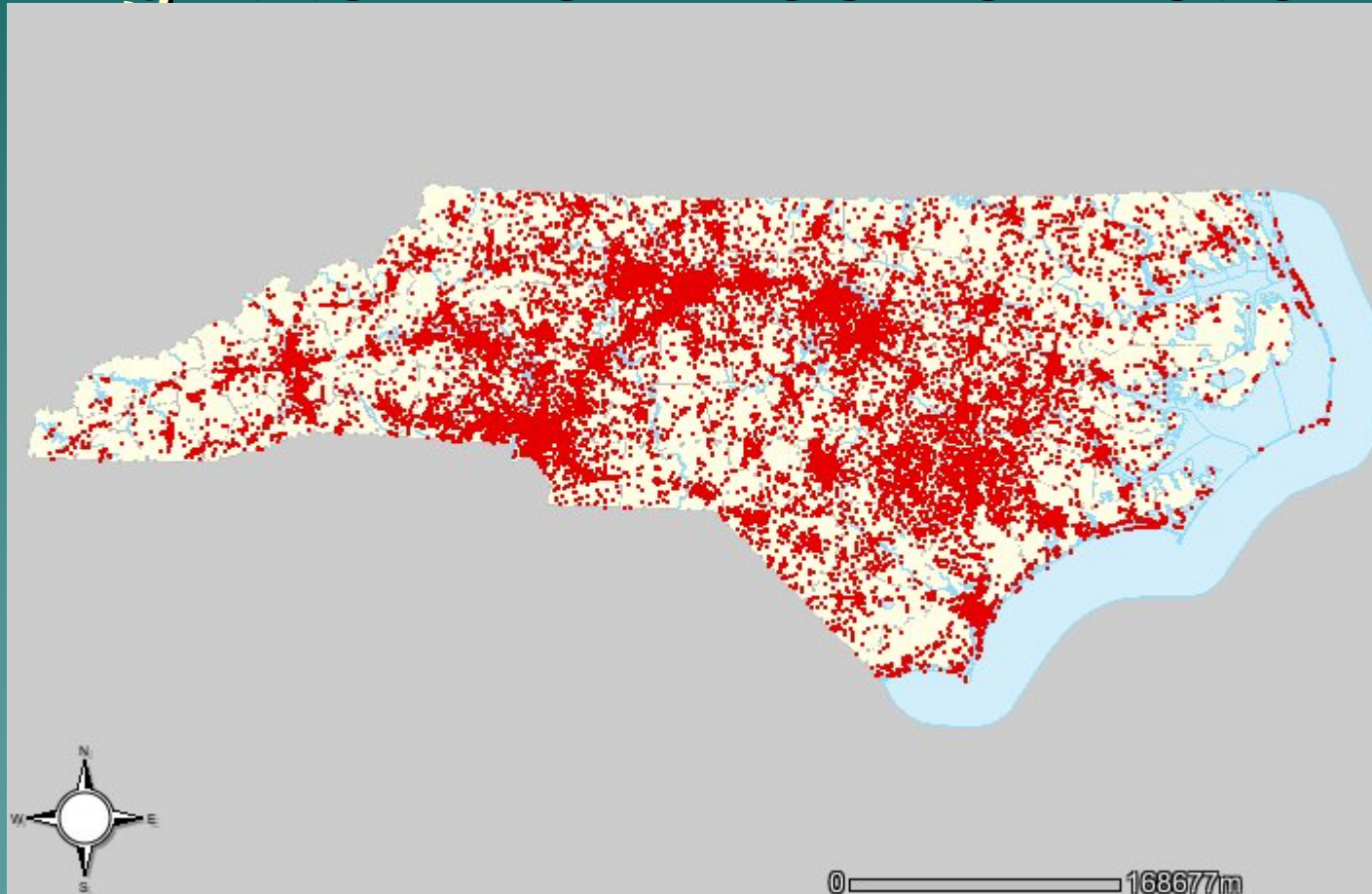
How precautionary choices shaped NC's Source Water Reporting

- ◆ Task: define source area for a water supply => NC designated larger than legally required supply areas for surface water sources, public wells
- ◆ Task: locate all "potential contaminant sources," define risk of contamination => NC merged databases for 25,000 facilities and incidents, defined all as "high" risk

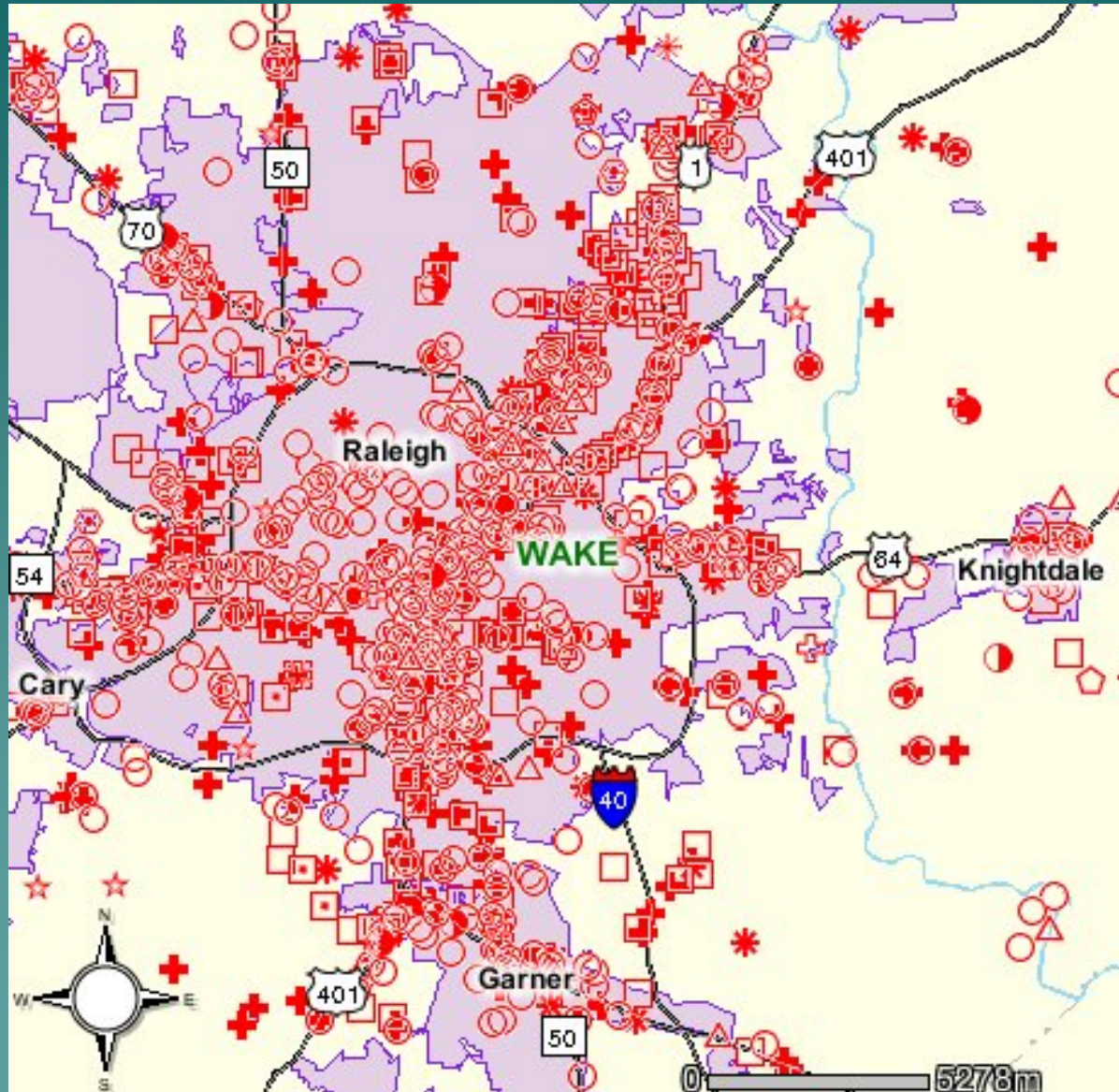
NC's H2O Potential Contamination Sources

- ◆ Underground Fuel Storage Tanks
 - ◆ Intensive Livestock Operations
- ◆ Dry Cleaners, Autobody Shops and Manufacturing chemicals
 - ◆ Old Unlined Landfills
 - ◆ Toxic Pesticides
- ◆ Superfund Hazardous Waste Sites
 - ◆ Spills and Unknown Sources
- ◆ Wastewater discharges and major land application permits

NC's Public Water Supply Potential Contam. Source interactive map— Right to Know Tool for Action



Bring it Home! Community Impacts



Millions of NC Well Users Vulnerable

- ◆ No requirement for notification of well-users near documented groundwater contamination. Water is assumed safe.
- ◆ No assurance that a buyer or renter of a home that uses a well will have safe water supply.
- ◆ If well contamination is found, no general source of funding for hookups, filters or other safe water supply.

A Non-Stick Cautionary Tale: DuPont, C8, Water and Workers

- ◆ C8 (PFOA) used in making teflon and hundreds of products
- ◆ EPA Science Advisory Panel: “likely carcinogen”
- ◆ High DuPont worker exposures, present in blood of >95% of US residents
- ◆ DuPont fined \$16.5M for failure to disclose health and exposure info

C8 Plant, DuPont-Fayetteville



Precautionary Activism => DuPont

- ◆ **NC C8 Working Group**—Collaboration with United Steelworkers, Clean Water for NC, NC Occupational Safety and Health, WaterKeeper Alliance, Cape Fear River Watch Visit: www.NCC8.org
- ◆ Research, regulatory accountability
- ◆ Local organizing—right to know
- ◆ Shareholder activism: precautionary resolution to stop C8 production completely 2005: 9% support; 2006: 27%

Other Examples of Cautionary Approaches to DW Protection

- ◆ **State Groundwater standards** can be purely health based. More parameters, often have tighter values than Fed SDWA
- ◆ NJ well testing law: any new wells and upon real estate transfer
- ◆ Secondary Containment of Underground Storage Tank Systems
- ◆ CWA "Designated uses" = Water Supply, no new or expanded WW discharges

Recent NC actions prevent DW degradation, protect consumers

- ◆ 2005 Reservoirs Protection Act: requires studies of conditions and trends of WQ in major DW reservoirs; quick turn around, action
- ◆ Pending Legislation: required notification of well users, testing of new and transferred wells, Emergency Drinking Water Fund
- ◆ Full liability, containment for USTs

Privatization of Water Supplies Prevents Precautionary Approach

- ◆ short-circuits community involvement by limiting public governance, overall disclosure of info and accountability to public
- ◆ Often prioritizes large commercial interests vs. residential water customers => wasteful rate structures de-incentivize sustainable use
- ◆ maximizes profits and cost reduction over affordability, service and sustainability, accurate reporting, and worker protections
- ◆ limits overall disclosure of info and accountability to public

Who's our caution for, anyway?

Water is a fundamental human right and a public trust to be guarded by all levels of government, therefore, it should not be commodified, privatized or traded for commercial purposes.

Water is best protected by local communities and citizens who must be respected as equal partners with governments in the protection and regulation of water.

--from the Cochabamba resolution,
2000

