

MEDIA RELEASE

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WATER UTILITY SERVICE TO TOPSAIL ISLAND TO BE DISCONTINUED ON SEPTEMBER 5

North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper has issued a mandatory evacuation for barrier islands which includes Topsail Island. The evacuation is effective today, September 4, 2019 at 8:00am. In addition, the National Weather Service has issued advisories that warn of severe storm surge and likely ocean over wash of Topsail Island. These conditions place the underground water system in jeopardy.

ONWASA maintains over 33 miles of water mains on Topsail Island. The island is fed from the Onslow County mainland via deep underground connections that extend under the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway. If portions of the water mains on the island are lost large quantities of ONWASA's water reserves would be placed in immediate jeopardy if the island is not isolated.

ONWASA will discontinue water utility service to the island as winds reach 45 miles per hour on September 5th. Emergency crews would be unable to safely respond to main breaks at those wind speeds.

ONWASA crews, equipment, and supplies have been pre-positioned in Sneads Ferry to assess any damage to the island and begin effecting emergency repairs as soon as it is safe to do so. ONWASA has also secured emergency agreements with large contractors to speed water utility reconstruction in the service area if necessary.

ONWASA is prepared to provide an emergency potable water distribution point at the Onslow County Environmental Education Center and Public Library following the storm if necessary. Other emergency water distribution points around Onslow County may be activated following the storm if needed. All emergency water distribution points will be clearly identified and staffed by ONWASA and all potable water is free at those emergency distribution sites. Further details on emergency water distribution will be provided following the storm event.

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