

SMALLBIZ@EPA

EPA's Asbestos and Small Business Ombuds Program

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR THE REGULATED SMALL BUSINESS COMMUNITY

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POLICY AND REGULATION

EPA Finalizes Rule to Reduce Wasteful Methane Emissions and Drive Innovation in the Oil and Gas Sector

On November 12, 2024, EPA announced a final rule to reduce methane emissions from the oil and gas sector. The rule facilitates implementation of Congress's directive in the Inflation Reduction Act to collect a Waste Emissions Charge to better ensure valuable natural gas reaches the market rather than polluting the air. This final rule delivers on this directive and incentivizes companies to take near-term action to conserve valuable energy resources for American consumers and reduce methane emissions – a potent

greenhouse gas that is responsible for approximately one-third of the global warming we are experiencing today. [Read the press release for more on this rulemaking to reduce methane emissions from the oil and gas sectors.](#)

Waste Emissions Charge for Petroleum and Natural Gas Systems: Procedures for Facilitating Compliance, Including Netting and Exemptions

On November 18, 2024, EPA posted a *Federal Register* Notice promulgating a regulation to facilitate compliance with the requirements of the Waste Emissions Charge in the Clean Air Act's (CAA) Methane Emissions Reduction Program (MERP). Enacted as part of the Inflation Reduction Act, this program requires the EPA to impose and collect an annual charge on methane emissions that exceed waste emissions thresholds specified by Congress. This final rule is effective January 17, 2025. [Read more on the rulemaking for waste emissions for petroleum and natural gas systems in the Federal Register.](#)

Excess Emissions During Periods of Startup, Shutdown, and Malfunction; Partial Withdrawals of Findings of Failure to Submit State Implementation Plan

On November 26, 2024, the EPA posted a *Federal Register* Notice to take direct final action to partially withdraw two final actions finding that 13 States and/or local air pollution control agencies failed to submit State Implementation Plan (SIP) revisions required by the Clean Air Act (CAA) in a timely manner to address the EPA's 2015 findings of substantial inadequacy and "SIP calls" for provisions applying to excess emissions during periods of startup, shutdown, and malfunction (SSM). This final action would render no longer applicable certain CAA deadlines for the EPA to impose sanctions if a State does not submit a complete SIP revision addressing the outstanding requirements and to promulgate a Federal Implementation Plan (FIP). Concurrently, the EPA is also issuing a parallel proposal of this withdrawal action. This action is effective on January 10, 2025, without further notice, unless the EPA receives significant adverse comment by December 26, 2024. [Read the new revisions and partial withdrawals on the rulemaking in the Federal Register.](#)

Guideline on Air Quality Models; Enhancements to the AERMOD Dispersion Modeling System

On November 29, 2024, the EPA posted a *Federal Register* Notice to promulgate revisions to the *Guideline on Air Quality Models*. The *Guideline* has been incorporated into EPA's regulations, satisfying a requirement under the Clean Air Act (CAA) for EPA to specify, with reasonable particularity, models to be used in the Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD) program. The *Guideline* provides EPA-preferred models

and other recommended techniques, as well as guidance for their use in predicting ambient concentrations of air pollutants. EPA has revised the *Guideline*, including enhancements to the formulation and application of EPA's near-field dispersion modeling system, AERMOD, and updates to the recommendations for the development of appropriate background concentration for cumulative impact analyses. This rule is effective January 28, 2025. [Read the final rule in the Federal Register for more on these revisions and enhancements to the Guideline.](#)

Reconsideration of the Dust-Lead Hazard Standards and Dust-Lead Post-Abatement Clearance Levels

On November 11, 2024, as part of EPA's high-priority efforts to reduce childhood lead exposure, and in accordance with a U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit 2021 opinion, EPA is finalizing its proposal to lower the dust-lead hazard standards to any reportable level as analyzed by a laboratory recognized by EPA's National Lead Laboratory Accreditation Program (NLLAP). This final rule is effective January 13, 2025. [Read the final rule in the Federal Register on lead exposure and for more on EPA's efforts to reduce exposure.](#)

Rubber Tire Manufacturing: National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAP)

On November 13, 2024, EPA finalized amendments to the National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAP) for rubber tire manufacturing. The amendments in this rulemaking address unregulated emissions of hazardous air pollutants (HAP) from the rubber processing subcategory and will fulfill the EPA's obligation to address all HAP listed in the Clean Air Act for this source category. In addition, this rule establishes new standards for the rubber tire industry that meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act. [Read more on the latest NESHAP amendments for rubber tire manufacturing.](#)

Mefenoxam; Pesticide Tolerances

On November 4, 2024, EPA posted a *Federal Register* Notice for a regulation to establish tolerances for residues of mefenoxam in or on Palm oil. Syngenta Crop Protection, LLC requested these tolerances under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (FFDCA). This regulation became effective November 4, 2024. Objections and requests for hearings must be received on or before January 3, 2025, and must be filed in accordance with the [instructions provided in 40 CFR part 178](#) (see also Unit I.C. of the supplementary information). [Read the final rule on mefenoxam tolerances in the Federal Register.](#)

Fluindapyr; Pesticide Tolerances

On November 8, 2024, EPA posted a *Federal Register* Notice for a regulation to establish tolerances for residues of fluindapyr in or on soybean, forage; soybean, hay; soybean, hulls; and soybean, seed. FMC Corporation requested these tolerances under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (FFDCA). This regulation became effective November 8, 2024. Objections and requests for hearings must be received on or before January 7, 2025, and must be filed in accordance with the [instructions provided in 40 CFR part 178](#) (see also Unit I.C. of the supplementary information). [Read the final rule on new fluindapyr tolerances in the Federal Register.](#)

Decabromodiphenyl Ether and Phenol, Isopropylated Phosphate (3:1); Revision to the Regulation of Persistent, Bioaccumulative, and Toxic Chemicals Under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA)

On November 19, 2024, the EPA posted a *Federal Register* Notice to finalize revisions to the regulations for decabromodiphenyl ether (decaBDE) and phenol, isopropylated phosphate (3:1) (PIP (3:1)), two of the five persistent, bioaccumulative, and toxic (PBT) chemicals addressed in final rules issued under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) in January 2021. After receiving additional comments, the Agency has determined that revisions to the decaBDE and PIP (3:1) regulations are necessary to address implementation issues and to further reduce the potential for exposures to decaBDE and PIP (3:1) for humans and the environment to the extent practicable. This rule is effective on January 21, 2025. [Read the final rule for more on the PBT chemicals addressed under TSCA in the Federal Register.](#)



KEY DATES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Agency Information Collection Activities; Submission to the Office of Management and Budget for Review and Approval; Comment Request; Exchange Network Grants Progress Reports (Renewal)

On November 27, 2024, EPA posted a *Federal Register* Notice extending the public comment period to December 27, 2024, for an Information Collection Request (ICR), Exchange Network Grants Program (EPA ICR Number 2207.09, OMB Control Number 2025-0006) EPA submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and approval in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act. This is a proposed extension of the ICR, which is currently approved through November 30, 2024. Public comments were previously requested via the *Federal Register* on September 19, 2024, during a 60-day comment period. This notice allows for an additional 30 days for public

comments. [Read more in the Federal Register on this information collection request and to submit a public comment.](#)

Agency Information Collection Activities; Proposed Renewal of an Existing ICR Collection and Request for Comment; Assessment of Environmental Performance Standards and Ecolabels for Federal Procurement

On November 27, 2024, EPA posted a *Federal Register* Notice, in compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA), to announce the availability of and solicit public comment on an Information Collection Request (ICR) EPA is planning to submit to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB): “Assessment of Environmental Performance Standards and Ecolabels for Federal Procurement,” identified by EPA ICR No. 2516.05 and OMB Control No. 2070-0199. This ICR represents a renewal of an existing ICR that is currently approved through September 30, 2025. Before submitting the ICR to OMB for review and approval under the PRA, EPA is soliciting comments on specific aspects of the information collection that is summarized in the FR notice. The ICR and accompanying material are available in the docket for public review and comment. Comments must be received on or before January 27, 2025. [Read more on the proposed renewal in the Federal Register and to make a public comment.](#)

Open Comment Period: EPA Proposes Tighter Limits on Harmful NOx Emissions from New Stationary Combustion Turbines to Better Protect Nearby Communities

On November 22, 2024, EPA proposed to strengthen limits on emissions of nitrogen oxides (NOx) from most new, modified, and reconstructed fossil fuel-fired stationary combustion turbines, reducing exposure to dangerous air pollution for nearby communities. The proposal would ensure that new turbines built at power plants or industrial facilities — especially large ones that could operate for decades — would be among the most efficient and lowest-emitting turbines ever built. The proposal provides regulatory certainty for the power sector, while supporting the continued delivery of reliable and affordable electricity. EPA estimates this proposed rule would reduce NOx emissions by 198 tons in 2027 and 2,659 tons in 2032. EPA will accept comments for 90 days after the proposal is published in the *Federal Register*. Comments, identified by Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2024-0419, [may be submitted via www.regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov). For more information, visit [Stationary Gas and Combustion Turbines: New Source Performance Standards \(NSPS\)](#). [Read the press release for more on the proposed rule and tighter limits on harmful nitrogen oxide emissions.](#)



ASK SBEAP

Dear SBEAP:

We're trying to plan some sustainability initiatives for our facility, but are struggling to find information on projects we know will work for us. We'd be more comfortable investing the time, effort and money into something tested and proven practical for a facility similar to ours, but so many resources seem to be aimed at larger companies. Can you recommend anything for smaller operations?

Sincerely, Samuel Sustainability

Dear Samuel:

In October 2024, EPA's Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) published its most recent edition of "[Smart Steps to Sustainability](#)". This updated digital version of the sustainability guide uses a streamlined approach to help small businesses identify steps and resources to green their business. In addition to EPA's new resources, the [National Small Business Environmental Assistance Program \(SBEAP\)](#) have a collection of [sustainability-related case studies](#) for a variety of industry sectors and most of them are tailored for projects completed by small businesses. These listings can be applied to a wide range of industries and include energy-efficiency initiatives and recycling programs. You can even find industry-specific strategies such as replacements for cleaning solvents that can reduce your facility's regulated air emissions.

Remember, in addition to the resources described above, your [state Small Business Environmental Assistance Program, or SBEAP](#), may also be able to identify additional resources. SBEAPs typically provide free, confidential environmental compliance assistance, but many have experience helping small businesses identify efficiencies that can save money and reduce regulatory burden. In some states, funds to implement sustainable measures and processes may also be available. So, reach out to your [state SBEAP](#) contact by clicking on your state or calling 800-578-8898.



SPOTLIGHT

EPA Report Shows U.S. Fuel Economy Hits Record High and CO2 Emissions Reach a Record Low

On November 25, 2024, EPA released its 50th Annual Automotive Trends Report, demonstrating that model year (MY) 2023 vehicle fuel economy reached a record high

while greenhouse gas emissions dropped to record low levels. The report also shows that all 14 large automotive manufacturers are in compliance with EPA's light-duty GHG program requirements through the MY 2023 reporting period. Today, the new MY 2023 electric vehicles and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles on the road have led to 11% lower CO2 emissions. The 2024 EPA Automotive Trends Report celebrates its 50th anniversary and continues a long tradition of providing the public with a highly detailed look at progress in the auto industry. [Read the press release for more on the 50th Annual Automotive Trends Report.](#)

EPA Updates Ventilation Guidance to Prevent the Spread of Respiratory Viruses at Home, School, and Work

On November 1, 2024, the EPA released updated guidance on indoor air quality strategies for preventing the spread of common respiratory viruses in homes, schools, offices, and commercial buildings. EPA's updated guidance reflects the latest science on indoor air quality strategies and recent ventilation recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Respiratory viruses can spread more easily indoors than outdoors since the viral concentration can build up indoors and people are closer to each other. Each year, respiratory viruses are responsible for millions of illnesses and thousands of hospitalizations and deaths in the United States. [Read the press release for more on EPA's updated guidance to prevent the spread of respiratory viruses.](#)

EPA Highlights Progress Achieved to Reduce Waste and Conserve Resources on America Recycles Day

On November 15, 2024, on America Recycles Day, EPA highlighted progress achieved on actions in its "National Recycling Strategy" through implementation of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. As a key agency in the Biden-Harris Administration's efforts to build a circular economy, EPA joined the White House to recognize America Recycles Day with a [Presidential Proclamation](#). Since 1997, EPA has celebrated the nation's progress on recycling, and this year, EPA encourages organizations and individuals to continue expanding the ways they reduce, reuse, and recycle. Together with investments from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, EPA's work has helped to transform recycling and solid waste management across the country while creating jobs and strengthening the nation's economy. [Read the press release for more on EPA's National Recycling Strategy progress.](#)



EPA Finalizes Solvent 1,4-Dioxane TSCA Risk Evaluation

In November 2024, EPA developed and released a revised risk determination using the 2020 risk evaluation and 2024 supplement. EPA evaluated 1,4-dioxane under the amended Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) and completed the final risk evaluation in December 2020. EPA released a final supplement to the risk evaluation in November 2024. The supplement considers air and water exposure pathways not evaluated in the December 2020 risk evaluation and exposure to 1,4-dioxane generated as a byproduct. The supplement is intended to complete the risk evaluation on 1,4-dioxane as required under TSCA. [Read more on this TSCA solvent risk evaluation and its additional supplement.](#)

Biden-Harris Administration Makes Unprecedented Progress to Protect Communities from PFAS Pollution

On November 14, 2024, under the leadership of President Biden and Vice President Harris, EPA has delivered bold and concrete actions to protect people from PFAS, or per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, in their water and everyday lives while dramatically increasing investments in research and solutions. Specific actions and progress are detailed in [EPA's third annual progress report](#), highlighting the significant achievements the agency has made under its PFAS Strategic Roadmap and the Biden-Harris Administration's whole-of-government strategy to protect communities from the impacts of forever chemicals. [Read more about EPA's progress to protect communities from PFAS in the press release.](#)

EPA Launches New Initiative to Tackle PFAS, Identify Emerging Contaminants in Water

On November 20, 2024, EPA launched a new, no-cost technical assistance effort focused on reducing exposure to perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and other emerging contaminants in small or disadvantaged communities. This initiative is part of EPA's [Water Technical Assistance](#) (WaterTA) program. The Tackling Emerging Contaminants initiative will help [eligible public drinking-water systems](#) evaluate emerging contaminant issues, conduct initial water quality testing, and identify next steps in 200 small or disadvantaged communities over the next three years. EPA will also share best practices and amplify successes through case studies, fact sheets, webinars, and other resources regarding addressing emerging contaminants, including PFAS. [Read more on the EPA's new Tackling Emerging Contaminants initiative.](#)



Biden-Harris Administration Announces National Strategy to Prevent Plastic Pollution

On November 21, 2024, EPA released the “[National Strategy to Prevent Plastic Pollution](#),” outlining opportunities for action to protect communities from the impacts of plastic production and waste and detailing how government agencies, businesses, non-profits, and communities can take additional action to prevent plastic pollution. This strategy also aligns with the United States’ commitment to negotiating an ambitious international agreement with the aim of protecting public health and the environment by reducing plastic pollution around the world. The strategy is the third pillar of EPA’s “Building a Circular Economy for All” effort, following [national strategies on recycling](#) and [reducing food loss and waste](#). [Read the press release for more on EPA’s National Strategy to Prevent Plastic Pollution.](#)



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