



Distilled biosolids and residuals news from New England and Eastern Canada

November 23, 2022

Happy Thanksgiving!

### Record-Breaking Joint Residuals Conference with NEWEA

It was record attendance at the 2022 Northeast Residual & Biosolids Conference this year! Nearly 180 people from throughout New England traveled to Portsmouth, New Hampshire, to participate. It all started out with a huge turnout (almost 90 registered) for the tour of Dover's water resource recovery facility (WRRF) solids handling processes. WRRF Supervisor Ray Vermette accommodated all visitors, showing them the facility's shiny new screw presses and an ongoing pilot of an innovative desiccant drying technology to further reduce the volume of its wastewater solids and save the City money.

The conference reflects a long-standing collaboration between the New England Water Environment Association (NEWEA) and NEBRA with tradition calling for welcoming remarks from the NEWEA President. In this case, New Hampshire's own Frederick McNeil welcomed the group and teed up the rest of the conference. Eric Spargimino, current Chair of NEWEA's Residuals Management Committee, served as host for the first day. There were two technical sessions related to Thermal Hydrolysis Processes (THP) which recover resources from biosolids and can improve anaerobic digestion and other solids handling processes. Erik Larson of the Vaughan Company presented on "Doing More with the Same? Effect of THP on Digester Mixing" and Stantec's Joe Uglevich spoke about "Maximizing the Value of Biosolids from THP at the Piscataway WRRF".

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### NEBRA Celebrates 25th Anniversary at Northeast Residuals & Biosolids Conference

North East Biosolids & Residuals Association (NEBRA) alumni joined current NEBRA members on November 1st to look back on 25 years of improving biosolids utilization in the Northeast U.S. and Atlantic Canada. The anniversary fete began with a recorded welcome from NEBRA President Deb Mahoney, reflecting on her experience with NEBRA, some of the people she met through NEBRA, and the need for NEBRA more than ever. During the luncheon, Shelagh Connolly described the circumstances back in 1997 that gave rise to the formation of NEBRA. Although she claimed no credit, it was obvious to all in the room that Shelagh was driver that got NEBRA started. Speaking with Shelagh, NEBRA's first Interim Board President- Ann Bosiak Randall -- spoke of how she came to be involved with NEBRA after growing up on a dairy farm in New Hampshire, one that used biosolids to make the family plot prosper.

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**A message from Ned Beecher\* ...**

As I move on from NEBRA (but still Preaching For Appropriate Strategies), I am humbled by all you do for biosolids! - NB

Thanks, Janine, for your support & carrying it on!

25th Anniversary 1997-2022

nebra North East Biosolids & Residuals Association

What a treat to catch up at the Conference with John Donovan, James Myers, & Shelagh Connolly - my mentors.

Merci mes amis.

**THANK YOU, FRIENDS.**

You are the best colleagues I can ever imagine.

Thanks to all you steady NEBRA members, Board Members, & Committees.

NEWEA supported me & NEBRA in so many ways! Thank you Mary, Janice, Charlie, Journal staff

And what a hoot, the surprise song at the Residuals & Biosolids Conference Nov. 1st. Another example of the many talents in this community! Thank you Andrew, Anthony, Bill (driving all the way from Philly!), Bill, & Steve!

\*special paid "advertisement"

### MassDEP Teams Up With USGS to Study PFAS in Wastewater Treatment

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) has partnered with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to study per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in the influent, effluent, and sludges of nine water resource recovery facilities (WRRFs) with permits under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) to discharge to surface waters. These facilities are located across the Commonwealth and include WRRFs with a range of average daily flow from 40,000 to 18 million gallons per day. None of the facilities are industrial WRRFs although several have approved pretreatment programs to permit industrial waste discharges into the WRRF.

The study kicked off earlier this year with a series of meetings between MassDEP and the WRRFs volunteering to have their wastewater and sludges analyzed for PFAS. USGS has developed a sampling plan which includes four quarterly sampling events as well as PFAS analysis of the upstream and downstream waters to which these facilities discharge. Most of the sludge testing will be done according to EPA Method 1633 which is not yet multi-lab validated, however, USGS will be working with the laboratory that performed the initial validation for the new EPA testing method for non-aqueous substrates. One of the sampling rounds will include Total Oxidized Precursor Assay (TOPA) for influent wastewater and ambient waters. A data report is expected in 2024.

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### PFAS in Biosolids -- Updates

NEBRA's "Reg-Leg" Committee continues to be very active, contributing to comments letters on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s proposal to list two per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) as "hazardous" under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) -- better known as EPA's Superfund Program. The major concern is for liability and NEBRA and others continue to ask for specific exemptions under CERCLA for public water utilities. Copies of the letters and other resources are available to NEBRA members at [Reg-Leg Committee -- NEBRA \(nebiosolids.org\)](#). Here are just some of the issues the Reg-Leg Committee has been tracking lately.

The **Environmental Council of the States (ECOS) announced** in late October that it will be conducting an assessment of state environmental agency efforts on PFAS in biosolids. According to the press release, the survey "delves into each state's legislative and regulatory landscape, monitoring and treatment processes, testing and analysis protocols, and risk communication needs as they pertain to this challenging issue." ECOS aims to report out on its findings fairly quickly, possibly by the end of the year.

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## En Bref -- In Brief

#### NEBRA Annual Meeting and Board Elections

NEBRA held its annual membership meeting on October 21st on Zoom with 26 member organizations representing 25% of total membership, easily achieving 10% of member organizations required for a quorum to conduct business. The meeting agenda included an update on the strategic planning process initiated in late 2021 and a report on 2022 activities from the Executive Director. Attendees also heard from all of NEBRA's committees, including the ad hoc Bylaws Committee. The membership approved the slate of Board members up for reelection for 3-year terms: **Michael Hodge** (Synagro), **Chris Hubbard** (PWTEch), **Michael Lannan** (Tech Environmental), **Deborah Mahoney** (Brown & Caldwell), and **Tom Schwartz** (Woodard & Curran). During the election of officers, **Laura Marcolini** from Fuss & O'Neill was nominated for the Secretary position to round out the slate and started with Deb Mahoney and **Lise LeBlanc** (LP Consulting) continuing for another year as President and Vice-President of the Board, respectively, and **Art Simonian** (Mattabasset District) continuing for another year as Treasurer. A link to his reports as well as a recording of the annual membership meeting can be found on the [members-only page](#).

#### Deadline for Abstracts for WEF's 2023 Residuals & Biosolids Conference Extended

The Water Environment Federation (WEF) has extended the deadline to submit an abstract for the 2023 [Residuals and Biosolids Conference](#) (RBC). The 2023 RBC will be held May 16th through the 19th in Charlotte, North Carolina. Key theme of the conference is innovation and sustainability. Papers are specifically being sought on Land Application and Biosolids Markets, Sustainability and Resource Recovery, and Managing Biosolids in the Carolinas, which has been made especially difficult and costly due to PFAS. The deadline for submitting content has been extended to **December 1st**. For more information about the Call for Content as well as the link to submit, go to [rbc23-cfc\\_final.pdf \(wef.org\)](#).

#### Viewpoint Story About Biosolids Will Air in November

This Water Environment Federation (WEF) announced that the [Viewpoint](#) with Dennis Quaid special about biosolids will start airing on public television in November so keep an eye out for it on our local PBS station. In addition to the **5-minute segment** for PBS, there are **1-minute commercials** being shown on the major networks during November. The 1-minute commercials will be shown on a variety of networks, including CNN, MSNBC, CNBC, Discovery Life, Fox Business News and CNN Headline News during the month of November. WEF created the URL of [biosolids.org](#) which is featured at the end of the commercial and 5-minute story. Watch for the show and the commercial and let us know if you see it! If you haven't already, you can watch the full episode on the WEF website at: <https://www.wef.org/pbs>. WEF is encouraging its members and others to utilize the video and corresponding website for community engagement. Much of the messaging for the main script for PBS was crafted using the [Biosolids Communication Toolkit](#).

#### VTDEC Gets EPA Grant to Study PFAS and Microplastics in Food Packaging

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced numerous **grant awards** this Fall, intended to prevent pollution from being discharged to water resource recovery facilities (WRRFs) and the environment, funded with monies appropriated under the Bipartisan Infrastructure law. The first package of grants totaling \$12 Million was announced in September. The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation is getting \$350,000 under this EPA Pollution Prevention (P2) grant to work with food processors to evaluate microplastics and per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in food packaging. According to EPA's press release, the VTDEC will "will generate recommendations on ways to increase sustainability in packaging and evaluate the transport of PFAS and microplastic contaminants in food waste and the environment." The University of Southern Maine and the University of Massachusetts (UMass) - Boston were also among the 39 entities getting grants, with their projects focused on P2 for breweries. As EPA pointed out in its press release, P2 is the key to sustainability and that is especially true for biosolids/residuals recycling programs.

In a subsequent round of P2 grants, EPA awarded \$9 million to 32 entities to study various industries. The Connecticut Department of Energy and the Environment, the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services and the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management all received at least \$200,000. Connecticut and New Hampshire plan to study beer and beverage industries, while Rhode Island plans to look at metal manufacturing and fabrication. UMass- Amherst received funding under this grant program as well.

#### New Hampshire Completes Phase 1 of PFAS in Soil Study

In mid-October, the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) published the results of Phase 1 of its study of PFAS in soil. Phase 1 looked at concentrations of PFAS existing in soils across the state. The comprehensive study was led by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) working with the NHDES residuals program. USGS efforts involved 100 soil samples at a variety of depths for 36 PFAS, with controls for known PFAS sources. The analyses included some total oxidizable precursor analyses (TOPA). A quick review of the data shows that PFAS were detected in every shallow (0-6 inches) soil sample, PFOS concentrations were higher than PFOA concentrations, and both PFOA and PFOS concentrations in shallow soils were a little higher than what was found in [Vermont](#), with median concentrations of about 75 ppb and 1 ppb, respectively. The full paper (as well as the data files) can be found [here](#). This study will inform the NHDES' work in setting soil standards for PFAS as required by [HB-1547](#) which passed in the last session of the NH legislature. For a more in-depth article about NH's efforts, see [New Hampshire is in the process of developing a standard for PFAS in soil | New Hampshire Public Radio \(nhpr.org\)](#). NHDES has also scheduled a virtual listening session for stakeholders on establishing soil remediation standards for four PFAS on [December 8th at 1:00 pm](#).

## NEBRA Members in the News

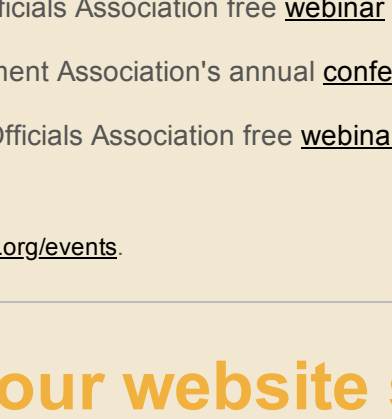
- Heartland Water Acquires Cogent Energy, [adding gasification](#) solutions for wastewater residuals
  - ZwitterCo helps farms recycle wastewater ([CNBC News](#))
  - [Stantec Institute](#) develops framework to analyze impacts of PFAS on wastewater
  - [Casella](#) earns 2022 world finance sustainability award
- [Email](#) us to let us know when you are in the news!

## Upcoming Events

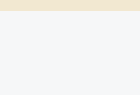
- January 9:** Northeast Waste Management Officials Association free [webinar](#) on gypsum wallboard, current state of recycling
- January 22-25:** New England Water Environment Association's annual [conference](#) in Boston, celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Clean Water Act
- January 24:** Northeast Waste Management Officials Association free [webinar](#) on gypsum wallboard, recycling opportunities

For a complete listing of Events, go to [www.nebiosolids.org/events](http://www.nebiosolids.org/events).

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