



Distilled biosolids and residuals news from New England and Eastern Canada

October 13, 2023

Biosolids Composting in the Northeast: Still Favored Despite Heaping Pushback





Anna Meyer for NEBRA. Photos courtesy of Casella Organics.

Where has all the composting gone? Concern over per- and polyflouroalkyl substances (PFAS) isn't the only reason for the decline in [biosolids composting](#) in the Northeast. There are also incentives to use anaerobic digestion at Water Resource Recovery Facilities (WRRFs) and a crowded compost market, among other pressures. But these deterrents aren't universal, and composting is still the choice of many water resource recovery facilities around the Northeast.

[Read more...](#)

CERCLA Liability Still a Major Concern for Passive Receivers of PFAS

NEBRAMail has reported on this major concern in the past (see [CERCLA Liability Advocacy — NEBRA \(nebiosolids.org\)](#)). The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has proposed to designate several per- and polyflouroalkyl substances (PFAS) compounds as “hazardous” under the Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act CERCLA (most

commonly known as the Superfund law) and has plans to add more to the list. The EPA has stated that it would use its discretionary authority to target the sources of PFAS contamination, but that does not prevent private parties from bringing passive receivers into a CERCLA clean up action.

[Read more...](#)



Take Action Today: Urge Congress to Protect Water Utilities from CERCLA and Ensure Polluters Pay!

PFAS Regulatory News and Updates

New reporting rules for manufacturers/importers of PFAS, Department of Defense destruction guidance, EPA's Science Advisory Board Biosolids Panel on risk assessment and more.

[Read more...](#)

NEBRA Goes to Chicago!



Five days in the Windy City recently provided NEBRA Executive Director Janine Burke-Wells with a valuable opportunity to listen, learn, communicate, and collaborate with water quality professionals from all over the world. Her attendance at [weftec](#), the Water Environment Federation (WEF)'s annual technical conference, was also a chance for thousands of industry professionals to be introduced to the North East Biosolids & Residuals Association and its work. This year, more than 30,000 attendees brought their collective expertise and enthusiasm to the McCormick Conference Center in Chicago.

[Read more . . .](#)

En Bref -- In Brief

WEF 2024 Residuals & Biosolids Conference: Call for Content is Open

The Water Environment Federation (WEF) is heading to Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, June 18th through the 21st for the 2024 Residuals and Biosolids Conference (RBC). WEF is currently seeking content for this perennial powerhouse of a conference, and you have until November 16, 2023 at 11:59pm EST to present your ideas for podium presentations, entire sessions and/or workshop proposals. Sessions are typically longer (1 to 2.5 hours) and can include panels, mini-workshops, and interactive discussions. WEF is looking for creative approaches to managing residuals and biosolids in light of uncertainties and new challenges we face as managers of these materials. The themes for the 2024 include public perception, regulatory changes, sustainability, and resiliency. The WEF RBC Steering Committee is soliciting content addressing the following topical areas:

- Research & Innovations
- Environmental Justice & Inclusion
- Outreach & Cases on Bringing all Stakeholders Together
- Emerging Issues (PFAS, Microplastics, Covid, etc.)
- Thickening & Dewatering
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Digestion & Stabilization

- ☐ Thermal Processes
- ☐ Land Application
- ☐ Regulatory and Program Drivers
- ☐ Economics and Project Delivery
- ☐ Resource Recovery and Sustainable Practices (Biogas, Energy, etc.)
- ☐ Troubleshooting & Optimization
- ☐ Case Studies & Lessons Learned
- ☐ Poster Presentations

Go here for more information: [Residuals and Biosolids Conference](#)

Massachusetts Senate Holds Hearing on Proposed Moratorium on “Activities Generating PFAS Emissions”

NEBRA, the National Association of Clean Water Agencies, and others wrote letters to the Massachusetts Legislature late September regarding [Senate Bill No. 2053](#). The Massachusetts Water Environment Association (MAWEA) wrote a letter and provided oral testimony. Mickey Nowak, MAWEA’s Government Affairs Committee Chair, spoke to the committee on September 20th expressing the major concerns clean water facilities have with this legislation as proposed. The full bill title is *An Act Establishing a Moratorium on the Procurement of Structures or Activities Generating PFAS Emissions*. As written, it would significantly stifle innovative PFAS solutions for biosolids, such as pyrolysis and gasification, as well as established technologies such as biosolids dryers. It also prevents the modification of existing structures which will impact sewage sludge incinerators (SSIs) already operating in the Commonwealth. For a copy of NEBRA’s letter, go to the [Reg-Leg Committee](#).

Heartland Water Technology Opens Technology Center

NEBRA member Heartland Water Technology, Inc. (Hudson, MA) held a grand opening with ribbon cutting ceremony for its new 30,000-square-foot technology center constructed in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. The Robert E. Cawthorn Technology Center features a commercial-scale version of Heartland’s HelioStorm™ technology. HelioStorm™ is an ultra-high temperature ionic gasifier that produces syngas and carbon products for residuals. According to the press release, HelioStorm™ is electrically driven, combustion free, and operates at 3,000 degrees Celsius for Assured PFAS Destruction™. The technology can be used for biosolids, waste plastics, PFAS resins, medical and other wastes. Heartland offers the technology as a turnkey service, supplying the capital and the operating services. You can learn more about it in this video from the grand opening: [HelioStorm Video — Heartland Water Technology \(heartlandtech.com\)](#). Or you can [sign up](#) for the NEBRA Lunch & Learn on December 8th!

EPA PFAS Research Grants – Request for Applications

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is requesting proposals for **Research for Understanding PFAS Uptake and Bioaccumulation in Plants and Animals in Agricultural, Rural, and Tribal Communities**. The grant opportunity opened on October 6th and closes on December 6th. EPA will be hosting an informational webinar about this grant opportunity on October 26th at 1 pm EST. The purpose of the funding is to improve understanding of the bioaccumulation of PFAS in plants and animals within agricultural operations. PFAS bioaccumulation via biosolids land application is one of five focus areas for this research funding. Community engagement is required and proposals must include agricultural industry partners. Total grant funding is \$8 Million. EPA is anticipating awarding 5 grants. The maximum grant request is \$1.6 million and the research must be completed within four years. Here’s the best link for more information, to apply, and to register for the informational webinar: [Research for](#)

EPA HQ Biosolids Staff Updates

Dr. David Tobias recently welcomed another staffer to his EPA Biosolids Team. **Sophie Greene** joins the team from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, where she was the PFAS Coordinator. Sophie's previous work includes human health risk assessment and emerging contaminant prioritization for the EPA. This will come in handy as EPA continues working on the risk assessment for PFAS in biosolids. The Biosolids Team now includes four full-time employees to support all the ongoing biosolids regulatory work. Other team members are Tess Richman and Dr. Lisa Weber. The EPA Biosolids Program falls under the Health and Ecological Criteria Division, Office of Science & Technology in the Office of Water.

CHECK IT OUT!! *Happy Halloween -- These are Scary!*

[Here's What Really Happens When You Flush a Toilet](#)

[Groom's Ex-girlfriend Ruins Wedding with Sewage Bucket](#)

[Wombats Poop Cubes, and Scientists Finally Got to the Bottom of It](#)

[The Magnetic Slime Robot That Could Retrieve Accidentally Swallowed Objects](#)

[Artificial intelligence technology behind ChatGPT Was Built in Iowa — With a Lot of Water](#)



Upcoming Events

October 16: MABA Presents on the new [NYSDEP limits](#) for land-applied biosolids

October 24: MABA webinar with [Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association](#) on assessing the risk of PFAS from land applied biosolids vs. other common exposure pathways

October 27th: NEBRA Lunch & Learn – Navigating Dark Waters: The Importance of [Proactive PFAS Communications](#)

November 1-2: [Northeast Residuals & Biosolids Conference](#), The Venue in Portsmouth, New Hampshire

For a complete listing of Events, go to www.nebiosolids.org/events.

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