Allegheny County Sportsmen's League

www.acslpa.org

Conservation Committee Report

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Jack Walters—Conservation Chairman

September—October 2024

The Conservation Pledge

I give my pledge as an

American to save and faithfully defend from waste, the natural resources of my country; the soil, the water, the air, the minerals, the plant life and the wildlife.

This is my Pledge!

Inside this issue:

Shapiro Administration Launches New Program in Pennsylvania to Plug Orphan Oil and Gas Wells, Creating Jobs and Cutting Methane Emissions in the Commonwealth

Under Governor Shapiro's leadership, DEP has achieved historic progress by plugging over 260 wells across the Commonwealth – more than in the previous 10 years combined – reducing methane emissions, improving public health, and creating Pennsylvania jobs.

The new grant program is designed to help plug some of Pennsylvania's estimated 350,000 orphaned wells and is part of the $76 million in federal funding provided through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA).

Governor Josh Shapiro and **Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Acting Secretary Jessica Shirley**

launched a new grant program aimed at

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Biden-Harris Administration Makes $965M Available to Fund Clean School Buses that Reduce Pollution, Save Money, and Protect Children's Health

Latest funding opportunity under the Biden-Harris Administration's Investing in America agenda builds on nearly $3 billion already invested into clean school buses nationwide

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced the latest round of funding from the Clean School Bus Rebate Program with up to $965 million available to school districts. The Biden-Harris Administration's Investing in America agenda continues to accelerate the transition of the nearly 500,000 school buses in America to cleaner technologies, helping to protect the

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Shapiro Administration Launches New Program in Pennsylvania to Plug Orphan Oil and Gas Wells, Creating Jobs and Cutting Methane Emissions in the Commonwealth (continued)

plugging orphaned oil and gas wells throughout the state. This initiative supports the **Shapiro Administration's** commitment to reducing methane emissions, protecting public health, and creating jobs across Pennsylvania.

The new program is part of the $76 million in funding from the **Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)** under the **Biden-Harris Administration**. It offers grants up to $40,000 for wells 3,000 feet deep or less, and up to $70,000 for wells deeper than 3,000 feet. The grants will be available to qualified well pluggers for orphan wells, which are wells that were abandoned before 1985. Applications will open on **October 9, 2024**, through DEP's website, and grants will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis.

"By prioritizing the capping and plugging of orphaned and abandoned wells, my Administration is making meaningful strides in reducing greenhouse gas emissions - while also supporting thousands of good-paying energy jobs across Pennsylvania," said **Governor Shapiro**. "Pennsylvania has a long legacy as an energy leader – and these wells are proof of that. Now, we are continuing that legacy by plugging and capping them, improving air quality, reducing emissions, protecting public health, and creating jobs. We are rejecting the false choice between protecting jobs and protecting our planet – and my Administration will continue to draw down as much federal funding as possible to do this critical work."

"Orphan wells can leak methane, a potent greenhouse gas, into the atmosphere and pollute groundwater. It is not a matter of 'if' an orphan well will be a threat to the environment and public health – it's a matter of 'when'," said **DEP Acting Secretary Shirley**. "This new program will allow private entities to plug lower-risk and lower-cost orphan wells while DEP focuses on priority wells that can be more expensive to plug. Plugging these orphan wells creates good-paying jobs and improves the environment. We are encouraging any qualified well pluggers to apply and help improve the economy and the environment."

Since day one, the **Shapiro Administration** has been dedicated to maximizing every opportunity to plug orphaned and abandoned wells in Pennsylvania, successfully plugging over 260 wells so far — more than in the previous 10 years combined. The 2024-25 budget allocated $11 million to **DEP's Office of Oil and Gas Management**, ensuring that Pennsylvania can fully leverage available federal funds for well plugging.

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Shapiro Administration Launches New Program in Pennsylvania to Plug Orphan Oil and Gas Wells, Creating Jobs and Cutting Methane Emissions in the Commonwealth (continued)

Recently, the United Mine Workers of America announced a new apprenticeship program to train workers to plug wells and restore well sites.

Pennsylvania is home to more than 350,000 orphaned and abandoned wells, contributing nearly 8 percent of the state's total methane emissions. Methane is especially hazardous, being up to 86 times more potent than carbon dioxide, which poses a potential risk to life and property, significantly warming the planet, and contributing to harmful air pollution.

DEP has identified over 27,000 orphaned and abandoned wells and is prioritizing those posing the highest risks. DEP will continue to focus new plugging contracts on these high-priority wells, along with nearby wells, to maximize efficiency and preempt environmental threats. Meanwhile, the grant program will fund wells lower on the current priority list so that they do not become environmental hazards in the future.

DEP is aggressively going after operators who are walking away from wells and stepping in with emergency plugging contracts where needed to protect public health. Through IIJA funding and existing state funding for DEP, the Commonwealth is moving aggressively to tackle this massive contributor of greenhouse gases.

More information on the grant program is available on the DEP website: Rewriting Pennsylvania's Legacy Orphan Well Plugging Grant Program.

For more information, visit the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's website,

Source: **Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)**

Biden-Harris Administration Makes $965M Available to Fund Clean School Buses that Reduce Pollution, Save Money, and Protect Children's Health (continued)

more than 25 million children who ride a

school bus every day from harmful air pollution. This fourth round of funding will build on the previous nearly $3 billion in investments being distributed nationwide to further improve air quality in and around schools, reduce greenhouse gas pollution fueling the climate crisis, and help accelerate America's leadership in developing the clean vehicles of the future.

Under the Clean School Bus Program's multiple grant and rebate funding opportunities to date, EPA has awarded almost $3 billion to fund approximately 8,700 school bus replacements, approximately 95% of which are zero-emission, battery-electric. Funding has been awarded to nearly 1,300 school districts in nearly all 50 states and Washington D.C., along with several federally recognized Tribes and U.S. territories, many of which are identified as priority areas serving low-income, rural, and, or Tribal students.

"Over the past three years, we've seen tremendous interest from schools across the country to upgrade to clean and zero-emission buses," **said EPA Administrator Michael S. Regan.** "Thousands of new buses on the road mean our children are breathing cleaner air on their way to and from school, their communities are seeing cleaner air and less climate pollution, and schools are supporting good paying American jobs."

The 2024 Clean School Bus Rebate Competition

Applications for this year's Clean School Bus Rebate Program are due on the EPA online portal by 4 p.m. EST on January 9, 2025. Applicants can request up to $325,000 per bus for up to 50 buses per application, an increase in the total buses per project in response to stakeholder feedback for larger projects to help achieve faster fleet turnover. Funds can be used to cover bus and infrastructure costs for awardees requesting electric school buses, as well as eligible training costs for bus drivers, electricians, and others working with the new buses or infrastructure.

Selectees may also be eligible for Inflation Reduction Act tax credits applicable to their bus and infrastructure purchases. For example, the clean vehicle tax credits for qualifying school buses are worth up to $40,000. Narrowing the cost difference between clean school buses and diesel school buses remains an integral goal of the EPA Clean School Bus Program. The agency adjusted electric school bus funding levels in this rebate program to help stretch funding further and drive down long-term electric school bus costs.

EPA is committed to ensuring the Clean School Bus Program advances environmental justice and delivers on President Biden's Justice40 Initiative, which sets a goal that 40% of the overall benefits of certain federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized by underinvestment and overburdened by pollution. EPA will prioritize applications that replace buses serving low-income, rural, and Tribal students. Large school districts with communities of concentrated poverty may also submit documentation to be prioritized if their application focuses on clean school buses serving those communities.

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Biden-Harris Administration Makes $965M Available to Fund Clean School Buses that Reduce Pollution, Save Money, and Protect Children's Health (continued)

The Biden-Harris Administration is committed to investing federal dollars in a way that drives high-quality job creation and inclusive economic growth in the clean energy economy. It's a priority for EPA that school districts prepare for how to support their workers, including bus drivers, mechanics, and other essential personnel, to safely operate and maintain the new buses and maintain high labor standards. As a result, workforce training is an eligible use of program funds, and EPA strongly encourages school districts to develop comprehensive workforce plans in partnership with their employees to help them prepare for the transition to clean school buses.

EPA is working closely with the Joint Office of Energy and Transportation (JOET) of the U.S. Department of Energy and U.S. Department of Transportation to provide school districts with support as they plan for and implement adding electric school buses to their fleets. Clean School Bus Program applicants and selectees can receive free technical assistance from JOET through resources such as one-on-one meetings and public webinars. The EPA and JOET are also able to connect school districts with local utility providers to assist them in the infrastructure planning necessary for projects including battery-electric school buses.

Proactive and ongoing communication with key stakeholders such as school boards and local utilities is critical to successful bus and infrastructure deployment. This rebate cycle incorporates a number of best practices to ensure that these key stakeholders are engaged and coordinating effectively. More information regarding required application materials are available in the Program Guide on the Clean School Bus Rebate Program webpage.

EPA is accepting rebate applications from Sept. 26 until Jan. 9, 2025.

EPA Clean School Bus Program Overview

EPA's Clean School Bus Program was created by President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which provides an unprecedented $5 billion of funding to transform the nation's fleet of school buses. The Clean School Bus Program funds zero and low-emission buses, including electric, propane, and compressed natural gas (CNG) buses that produce lower tailpipe emissions compared to that of their older diesel predecessors.

Diesel air pollution is linked to asthma and other public health problems that cause serious health concerns and missed days of school, with outsized impacts in overburdened communities. New zero-emission and clean buses will not only reduce air pollution and help address the outsized role of the transportation sector on climate change, but will also produce cleaner air for students, bus drivers, school staff working near bus loading areas, and people living in communities that buses drive through each day. Over the lifespan of the vehicles, clean school buses can also cost less to maintain and fuel than the older buses they are replacing – freeing up needed resources for schools.

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Biden-Harris Administration Makes $965M Available to Fund Clean School Buses that Reduce Pollution, Save Money, and Protect Children's Health (continued)

EPA's Clean School Bus Program is now responsible for over two-thirds of the committed electric school buses across the country, and each of these clean buses provide immediate public health and educational benefits as soon as the new buses hit the road. This funding, along with help from states and others, is helping transform the school bus market.

School districts will proceed with purchasing and deploying their new buses in a time frame that best suits their unique situation, including factors like the number of new buses they're deploying, need for utility upgrades, and familiarity with new bus technologies. As the project period comes to a close for the first funding opportunity, the 2022 CSB Rebates, EPA anticipates that many of the first wave of these zero-emission and clean school buses will be in service for the 2024-2025 school year, while many buses funded under subsequent funding opportunities, such as the 2023 CSB Rebates, will be in service for the 2025-2026 school year.

To learn more about the EPA Clean School Bus Program, visit the Clean School Bus Program webpage. Questions and feedback may be directed to CleanSchoolBus@epa.gov.

For further information: EPA Press Office (press@epa.gov)

Source: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

EPA Proposes to Expand Public Access to Information on More Than One Hundred PFAS "Forever Chemicals" and Support Needed Pollution Prevention Efforts

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is proposing to add 16 individual per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and 15 PFAS categories representing more than 100 individual PFAS to the Toxics Release Inventory (TRI). It would also designate them as chemicals of special concern so they must meet more robust reporting requirements, including reporting even for small concentrations. This proposed expansion of TRI would advance the commitments of the Biden-Harris Administration and EPA's PFAS Strategic Roadmap to address the health and environmental impacts of PFAS by promoting pollution prevention, and informing the public about environmental releases of these so called "forever chemicals." This proposal also advances the Biden-Harris Administration's commitment to environmental justice as well as the Administration's commitment to ending cancer as we know it as part of the Biden Cancer Moonshot by helping to connect the public and regulatory agencies with data to help inform decision-making with regard to chemicals with toxicity, including cancer, concerns because people can use TRI data to identify sources of pollution in their communities and ways that facilities can eliminate or reduce such pollution.

"With this rule, EPA would be able to collect data on how more than a hundred PFAS are released into the environment through Toxics Release Inventory reporting requirements," **said Assistant Administrator for the Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention Michal Freedhoff**. "This information will help EPA and communities better understand how PFAS are being used and managed across the country."

TRI was created to help track the waste management of toxic chemicals and support actions to prevent pollution and safeguard public health. TRI requires regulated facilities to report annually to EPA the amount of these toxic chemicals released into the environment and managed through recycling, energy recovery and treatment. Facilities must also report on practices used to prevent or reduce the generation of these chemicals as waste. EPA makes the data publicly available to inform decision-making and support pollution prevention efforts.

These PFAS are being proposed for addition to the TRI based on their toxicity to human health, the environment, or both. Data shows that the PFAS being proposed are linked to health outcomes such as cancer; damage to the liver and kidneys; and damage to reproductive and developmental systems.

EPA is proposing to set a reporting threshold of 100 pounds for manufacture, processing and other uses. This is consistent with reporting requirements for other PFAS on the TRI list added pursuant to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020 (NDAA). If finalized as proposed, all of the PFAS in a given category would count towards the 100-pound reporting threshold for that category. This change would improve reporting on PFAS by ensuring that facilities would not be able to avoid reporting on PFAS that are similar to one another if each PFAS does not meet the reporting threshold individually.

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EPA Proposes to Expand Public Access to Information on More Than One Hundred PFAS "Forever Chemicals" and Support Needed Pollution Prevention Efforts (continued)

For the same reason, EPA is also proposing to reclassify some PFAS that were previously added to the TRI individually as part of one of the 15 PFAS categories.

Finally, with this rule, EPA is also proposing to clarify how PFAS are automatically added to the TRI under the NDAA. The NDAA provides the framework for the automatic addition of PFAS to the TRI each year in response to specified EPA activities, including whenever the agency "finalizes a toxicity value." To assist stakeholders in understanding this automatic addition provision within the NDAA, EPA is proposing a list of different types of EPA toxicity values which automatically initiate the process of adding any PFAS associated with the toxicity value to the TRI list.

EPA will accept public comments on the proposed rule for 60 days following publication in the Federal Register via docket EPA-HQ-TRI-2023-0538 at the Regulations.gov page.

Learn more about the proposed rule.

For further information: EPA Press Office (press@epa.gov)

Source: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

EPA Announces Funding Opportunities to Support Farmworker Communities

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is announcing three new funding opportunities to support pesticide safety education for farmworkers, training for health care providers to better address pesticide-related illness, and technical assistance to support managing these grants. A total of almost $10 million will be awarded to at least four grantees to carry out this work over five years.

Over two million farmworkers help grow and harvest the food that feeds our nation. Farmworkers and their families are at high risk for pesticide exposure due to their work in and around areas where pesticides are used. Additionally, pesticide-related illness is widely misdiagnosed and underreported, in part because health care providers receive only limited training on occupational and environmental health. This population is largely comprised of people of color and immigrants with limited English proficiency, low incomes, and limited access to health care, making the health and safety of farmworker communities an issue of environmental justice.

“These programs are a critical step in EPA’s commitment to environmental justice,” **said Assistant Administrator for the Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention Michal Freedhoff**. “Farmworkers are at greater risk of developing pesticide-related illnesses, which is often misdiagnosed and mistreated. It’s vital that we invest in improving pesticide safety education and health care for farmworker communities.”

More information about each funding opportunity can be found below.

Farmworker Training and Education Program for Pesticide Safety

EPA is soliciting applications from community-based farmworker nonprofit organizations with experience in training agricultural workers or pesticide handlers or developing educational materials for them to support training, materials development and outreach to farmworker communities on pesticide safety, as well as to help them understand their rights under the Agricultural Worker Protection Standard (WPS) – a regulation that seeks to limit occupational pesticide exposure. The new program builds on decades of efforts by previous grantees while also including new measures to ensure projects are tailored to the need and culture of farmworker communities and in farmworkers’ native languages. EPA anticipates awarding two cooperative agreements to community-based farmworker organizations. A total of up to $6.3 million will be awarded to these five-year agreements beginning in 2025.

Please see EPA’s Farmworker Training and Education Program for Pesticide Safety website for more information on this agreement, eligibility and how to apply.

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EPA Announces Funding Opportunities to Support Farmworker Communities (continued)

Pesticides Health Care Initiative

EPA is soliciting applications from nonprofit organizations with experience training health care providers who serve farmworker populations for a five-year cooperative agreement of up to $2.1 million to improve health care providers' ability to prevent, recognize, treat, manage and report pesticide-related illness. This will be accomplished in part by strengthening health care providers' consideration of nonmedical factors influencing the health of patients at high risk of pesticide illness – the conditions in which they are born, grow, work, live and age.

Please see EPA's Pesticides Health Care Initiative website for more information on this agreement, eligibility and how to apply.

Pesticide Safety Grants Technical Assistance

EPA is soliciting applications for a cooperative agreement of up to $1.47 million to provide technical assistance with grants administration and compliance for grantees of the *Farmworker Training and Education Program for Pesticide Safety* and *Pesticides Health Care Initiative* agreements described above. This Grants Technical Assistance agreement will ensure that grantees have the support and resources necessary to manage EPA cooperative agreements. The grantee will also create resources to help organizations with the application process and preparing applications for pesticide worker safety cooperative agreements in the future. The technical assistance agreement will also be five years to align with the project periods for the agreements it will support.

Please see EPA's Pesticides Grant Technical Assistance Program website for more information on this agreement, eligibility and how to apply.

For further information: Contact: EPA Press Office (press@epa.gov)

Source: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

EPA Announces Selection of Members to the Science Advisory Board and the Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced selections for membership of the Science Advisory Board (SAB) and the Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee (CASAC). The well-qualified experts bring a cross-selection of scientific disciplines and the experience needed to provide sound scientific advice to EPA leadership to help advance the agency's mission.

"Everything we do at EPA is grounded in the latest and best available science and adheres to the highest standard of scientific integrity," **said EPA Administrator Michael S. Regan**. "The Science Advisory Board and the Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee will help ensure that EPA continues to receive sound, independent science-based advice. I want to thank those members leaving their positions for their outstanding service and welcome the newest members that will apply their widely-respected and trusted expertise to our work to protect public health and our environment."

The membership solicitation process resulted in 80 nominations for the SAB and 64 nominations for the CASAC. All candidates were evaluated by the Science Advisory Board Staff Office (SABSO) and recommendations were given by SABSO to the Administrator for him to consider for his selections.

EPA also announced today that Dr. Jeremy A. Sarnat, Associate Professor, Gangarosa Department of Environmental Health at the Rollins School of Public Health at Emory University, has been named chair of the CASAC.

"EPA had a diverse group of nominees this year, resulting in the selection of an outstanding group of scientists and technical experts to join both the SAB and the CASAC," **said Thomas Brennan, Director of the SABSO**.

New SAB Members

Dr. Jeremy Sarnat - Associate Professor, Gangarosa Department of Environmental Health, Rollins School of Public Health, Emory University.

SAB Member with Dual Appointment to the Agricultural Sciences Committee

Dr. Hui Li - Professor of Environmental Soil Chemistry, Department of Plant, Soil and Microbial Sciences, Michigan State University.

SAB Members with Dual Appointments to the Chemical Assessment Advisory Committee

Dr. John Groopman - Edyth H. Schoenrich Professor of Preventive Medicine, Department of Environmental Health and Engineering, Associate Director for Population Sciences, Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, Johns Hopkins University.

EPA Announces Selection of Members to the Science Advisory Board and the Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee (continued)

Dr. Wendy Heiger-Bernays - Emeritus Clinical Professor, School of Public Health, Boston University.

Dr. Jade Mitchell - Professor and Associate Chair, Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering, Michigan State University.

Dr. Carla Ng - Associate Professor, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, University of Pittsburgh.

SAB Member with Dual Appointment to the Climate Science Committee

Dr. Lea Hildebrandt-Ruiz - Associate Professor, McKetta Department of Chemical Engineering, University of Texas at Austin.

SAB Member with Dual Appointment to the Drinking Water Committee

Dr. Elizabeth Boyer - Professor of Environmental Science, Department of Ecosystem Science and Management, Penn State University.

SAB Member with Dual Appointment to the Economic Analysis Committee

Dr. Joshua Graff Zivin - Pacific Economic Cooperation Chair in International Economic Relations, Department of Economics, School of Global Policy and Strategy, University of California, San Diego.

Chair of the CASAC

Dr. Jeremy A. Sarnat - Associate Professor, Gangarosa Department of Environmental Health, Rollins School of Public Health, Emory University.

New CASAC Members

Dr. Jennifer Peel - Professor of Epidemiology, Department of Environmental and Radiological Health Sciences, Colorado State University.

Dr. Mary B. Rice - Associate Professor of Medicine, Division of Pulmonary and Critical Care, Department of Medicine, Harvard Medical School, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center.

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EPA Announces Selection of Members to the Science Advisory Board and the Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee (continued)

Dr. Barbara Turpin – Professor, Department of Environmental Sciences and Engineering, Gillings School of Global Public Health, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Additional information on the SAB.

Additional information on the CASAC.

Source: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

EPA Announces Winners of the 2024 Green Chemistry Challenge Awards

EPA Announces Winners of the 2024 Green Chemistry Challenge Awards

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is announcing the winners of the 2024 Green Chemistry Challenge Awards for new and innovative green chemistry technologies. This year's winners have developed chemical products and processes that reduce or eliminate the generation and use of hazardous substances, use less energy, and are more sustainable.

"This year's Green Chemistry Challenge Award winners developed innovative technologies that are driving us forward in new ways to help prevent pollution and protect human health," **said Jennie Romer, Deputy Assistant Administrator for Pollution Prevention in EPA's Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention**. "EPA has been presenting awards for green chemistry for more than a quarter-century, and it's never been more important to recognize innovations that make our air cleaner, eliminate chemical waste and advance our progress in the fight against climate change."

An independent panel of technical experts convened by the American Chemical Society Green Chemistry Institute formally judged the 2024 submissions and made recommendations to EPA. The winners are being recognized at a ceremony today in New York City as part of Climate Week NYC.

The 2024 Green Chemistry Challenge Award winners are:

- **Academic Category:** University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware, for developing a process to generate three classes of lubricant base oils commonly used in vehicles and industrial machinery. The new method makes the oil from plants rather than petroleum-based materials. This process also eliminates some hazardous chemicals used in the traditional process.
- **Small Business Award**: Viridis Chemical, Columbus, Nebraska, for developing a process for making ethyl acetate, a solvent widely used in industry and consumer products, from corn instead of chemicals derived from coal or methane. The hydrogen gas byproduct from the process can also be used to generate some of the energy required to operate the plant.
- **Greener Synthetic Pathways**: Merck & Co., Inc., Rahway, New Jersey, for developing a new "continuous process" for manufacturing an anti-cancer therapy drug. The new process prevents pollution by significantly reducing energy and water use compared to the traditional manufacturing process.

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EPA Announces Winners of the 2024 Green Chemistry Challenge Awards (continued)

- **Design of Safer and Degradable Chemicals:** Pro Farm Group, a Subsidiary of Bioceres Crop Solutions, Davis, California, for developing RinoTec™ Technology, an enhanced microbial pesticide for crops including corn, soybean, cotton and potatoes that reduces the environmental load of other pesticides.
- **Specific Environmental Benefit – Climate Change**: PhoSul®, Sugar City, Idaho, for making phosphate fertilizer that avoids hazardous chemicals and waste emissions associated with traditional phosphate fertilizer production, such as strong acids, heavy metals, and radioactive materials.

EPA is currently accepting nominations for the 2025 Green Chemistry Challenge Awards, from companies or institutions that have developed a new green chemistry process or product that helps protect human health and the environment. Nominations are due to EPA by Friday, Dec. 13, 2024.

Since the inception of the awards more than a quarter century ago, EPA and the American Chemical Society, which co-sponsors the awards, have presented awards to 144 technologies that decrease hazardous chemicals and resources, reduce costs and protect public health. Winning technologies are responsible for reducing the use or generation of nearly one billion pounds of hazardous chemicals, saving over 20 billion gallons of water, and eliminating nearly eight billion pounds of carbon dioxide equivalents released to the air.

Visit EPA online to learn more about the 2024 winners and EPA's Green Chemistry Challenge.

For further information: Contact: EPA Press Office (press@epa.gov)

Source: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

EPA Recognizes Children's Health Month

EPA is recognizing October as Children's Health Month. Every year, EPA begins the fall season by raising awareness about the crucial role our environment plays in the ability for our nation's children to grow up healthy and happy.

"Every child deserves to breathe clean air, drink clean water, and live in healthy, thriving neighborhoods," **said EPA Administrator Michael S. Regan**, "At EPA we are committed to making this a reality by advancing policies that reduce health disparities, and ensure that communities have the tools to safeguard their children's future and lifelong health."

Children, especially in vulnerable communities, are susceptible to the damages of pollution and climate change. Their developing bodies are sensitive to toxins, where they live can increase their exposure to pollutants and poverty can impact their recovery from environmental exposures. Early exposure to pollutants can last a lifetime. Most recently, EPA took these actions to advance children's health protection:

- Launching the Kids and Climate Health Zone, a collection of stories and information about how climate stressors are impacting children's health at various life stages across different regions of the U.S.
- Reducing diesel emissions and creating cleaner air for children and communities by awarding nearly $900 million through the EPA Clean School Bus Program Awards to approximately 53 school districts to support the purchase of over 3,400 zero-emission and clean school buses, part of an overall $5 billion investment.
- Reducing exposure to lead in drinking water for countless families through the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF), which announced $3 billion to help identify and replace lead service lines, part of a $9 billion total investment to replace an estimated 1.7 million lead service lines nationwide and $50 million in funding to reduce lead exposure in schools.
- Preventing exposure to "forever chemicals" by investing $10 billion to tackle PFAS in water, establishing the first-ever national drinking water standard for PFAS to protect over 100 million people, and initiating cleanup efforts at Superfund sites to protect children and public health.
- Finalizing a suite of standards to reduce air pollution from fossil fuel-fired power plants and investment in the transition to a clean energy economy.
- Strengthening safeguards to protect families and children from lead in contaminated soil at residential sites; and more.

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EPA Recognizes Children's Health Month (continued)

Thanks to the Biden-Harris Administration's Investing in America agenda historic investments from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act are changing the world where our children live, learn and play.

Join us in celebrating Children's Health Month. Get involved this October and learn more about children's environmental health.

For further information: Contact: EPA Press Office (press@epa.gov)

Source: U.S. EPA

EPA Releases New Tools to Help Small, Rural, and Tribal Communities with Lagoons Manage Wastewater and Protect Waterbodies

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency released resource tools to help protect public health and local water bodies in communities that rely on lagoons for wastewater management.

Lagoon wastewater treatment systems are typically used in communities that are smaller than 3,000 people and can lack the necessary financial and technical resources to comply with the Clean Water Act. EPA's new tools are intended to help local decisionmakers effectively and efficiently protect public health and the environment, address compliance challenges, and improve asset-management planning.

"Safely managing wastewater is essential to healthy, thriving communities — no matter if you live in urban, suburban, or rural settings," **said EPA Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator for Water Bruno Pigott**. "EPA's new tools enhance operations and management to ensure that all people can rely on clean and safe water."

The new resources include:

- The "First Stop Toolbox for Lagoons" identifies technical, financial, and regulatory support resources in a user-friendly web tool. This tool will help lagoon operators and technical assistance providers assess operations and compliance challenges in their lagoons, and in turn, help communities resolve these challenges on their own.
- The "Small Lagoon Communities Economic Streamlining Tool" and the "Individual Lagoon Tool" help states, authorized Tribes, and communities determine whether a water quality standards (WQS) variance is an appropriate step to take when a small community is experiencing compliance challenges related to ammonia. Both tools are accompanied by an implementation document: "Applying the EPA's Economic Analysis Tools to a WQS Variance for Ammonia for Small Lagoon Communities."

These tools were developed as priority actions under the EPA's 2022-2026 Lagoon Wastewater Treatment Action Plan, and respond to needs identified by state co-regulators and lagoon communities.

Learn more about lagoons in videos from EPA's Bruno Pigott and Kathryn Kazior.

Background
Many communities use lagoon wastewater systems as the only way to treat their community wastewater. About one-quarter of the nation's Publicly Owned Treatment Works (POTWs) regulated by the CWA's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program are lagoons.

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EPA Releases New Tools to Help Small, Rural, and Tribal Communities with Lagoons Manage Wastewater and Protect Waterbodies (continued)

For more than 30 years, EPA's Clean Water State Revolving Fund has helped communities invest in water infrastructure, like lagoon systems. The program provides low-cost assistance to borrowers across the country with water infrastructure challenges, and thanks to additional funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, even more funding is available to help small communities. Additionally, the EPA's Water Technical Assistance (WaterTA) services support communities to identify water challenges, build capacity, and develop technical and application materials to access funding.

For further information: EPA Press Office (press@epa.gov)

Source: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

EPA's GreenChill Program Recognizes Top Supermarket Industry Partners for Outstanding Practices in Protecting the Climate and Ozone Layer

In a ceremony at the FMI – The Food Industry Association's Energy and Store Development Conference, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's GreenChill Program recognized nine supermarket and commercial refrigeration leaders – eight food retail companies and one advanced refrigeration system manufacturer – for exceptional achievements to reduce the impacts of commercial refrigeration systems on the environment in 2023.

"Our GreenChill partners are setting a prime example of what it means to be a corporate leader in sustainability," **said Paul Gunning, Director of EPA's Office of Atmospheric Protection**. "We are proud of our GreenChill partners and recognize their work, whose continued innovation is protecting public health and the environment today and for generations to come."

GreenChill Partners go above and beyond regulatory requirements and commit to decreasing their impact on the environment by reducing refrigerant emissions. In reporting year 2024, there were more than 13,500 supermarket stores in the GreenChill Partnership, representing 30% of stores in the United States, and over 900 GreenChill certified supermarket stores throughout the nation, a 10% increase from 2023 reporting year. On average, GreenChill food retailers have emissions rates approximately 11% lower than the industry average of 25%.

The EPA thanks all participants in the Partnership and Store Certification Programs for being industry leaders in environmentally friendly refrigeration practices.

This year, EPA is proud to recognize the following GreenChill Partner companies:

Best Corporate Emissions Rate

- **City Market, Onion River Co-op** (Burlington, Vermont)
- **Meijer** (Grand Rapids, Michigan)

Most Improved Emissions Rate

- **BriarPatch Food Co-op** (Auburn and Grass Valley, California)
- **Brookshire Grocery Company** (Tyler, Texas)

Exceptional Goal Achievement

- **Hy-Vee** (Sycamore, Illinois)
- **K-VA-T Food Stores/Food City** (Abingdon, Virginia)

GreenChill's Store Certification Program recognized stores for meeting strict performance criteria including refrigeration systems with minimal potential impacts on the ozone layer and climate system. This year's GreenChill Store Certification recognitions honor:

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EPA's GreenChill Program Recognizes Top Supermarket Industry Partners for Outstanding Practices in Protecting the Climate and Ozone Layer (continued)

Store Leadership

- **Target** (San Antonio, Texas) completed a remodel that utilized efficient cooling technology to achieve an energy saving system in a warmer climate by installing a transcritical carbon dioxide system and an adiabatic gas cooler.

Store Certification Excellence

- **ALDI** (Batavia, Illinois) earned recognition for leading its peers in certifying more stores than any supermarket chain had previously, with all 611 stores reaching the highest Platinum-Level Certification.
- **Hillphoenix** (Conyers, Georgia) achieved this recognition for the 12th consecutive year as the commercial systems manufacturer with the most systems installed in GreenChill Certified Stores in the last year.

Store Recertification Excellence

- **ALDI** – For the fifth consecutive year, ALDI achieved GreenChill Store Certification for 164 locations across Alabama, California, Connecticut, Georgia, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Massachusetts, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Texas, Virginia, Wisconsin and West Virginia.
- **Target** – For the fifth consecutive year, Target achieved GreenChill Store Certification in 10 stores across California, Florida, New York, South Carolina and Washington.

About GreenChill

GreenChill is a voluntary partnership program that works cooperatively with the food retail industry to reduce refrigerant emissions and decrease their impact on the environment. Leaky systems can come at a high price, requiring retailers to pay for replacement refrigerant, system maintenance, and repairs. Reducing leaks is also beneficial to the environment, as some refrigerants deplete the stratospheric ozone layer and are potent greenhouse gases. In addition to reducing leaks, GreenChill participants are leaders transitioning to environmentally friendlier refrigerants and adopting advanced refrigeration technologies.

Since GreenChill launched in 2007, many food retailers have joined the Corporate Emissions Reduction Program (the Partnership) with the number of stores nearly tripling from 4,500 to over 13,500 today. The Partnership represents more than one-third of the U.S. food retail industry. On average, GreenChill Partners maintain corporate-wide emissions rates that are approximately half the industry average.

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EPA's GreenChill Program Recognizes Top Supermarket Industry Partners for Outstanding Practices in Protecting the Climate and Ozone Layer (continued)

Participation in GreenChill's Store Certification Program for food retailers also continues to grow. In reporting year 2024 (July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024), there were over 956 certified stores (798 Platinum, 74 Gold, and 84 Silver) across 44 states and the District of Columbia. Since it began in 2008, the GreenChill Store Certification Program has issued more than 5,200 annual certifications to over 1,400 individual stores.

Learn more about GreenChill and today's recognition recipients.

For further information: EPA Press Office (press@epa.gov)

Source: U.S. EPA

Shapiro Administration Secures Nearly $2 Million for Renewable Energy Planning for Pennsylvania

DEP will expand outreach and education for local governments looking to add wind, solar, and other renewable energy assets to their communities

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has secured a $1.96 million grant from the U.S. Department of Energy to develop Pennsylvania-specific outreach and education materials to help communities build out clean, renewable energy projects.

The Renewable Energy Siting through Technical Engagement and Planning program (R-STEP) will help communities plan renewable energy projects that can lower utility costs and fight climate change.

“Pennsylvania has always been an energy leader and with outreach and education through this grant, we can help local governments find the right places and right kind of renewable energy for their communities,” said **DEP Acting Secretary Jessica Shirley**. “Through the R-STEP program, DEP can help local communities identify the best places for wind and solar and engage with residents about possible projects.”

The R-STEP program aims to increase renewable energy development with more community buy-in and science-based siting for proposed projects. As the grant recipient, DEP along with a project team from the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors (PSATS), Penn State Extension Energy Team, and Penn State Center for Energy Law and Policy will develop materials that help guide local governments — covering topics like state and federal permitting, community engagement, and local zoning.

“Fighting climate change and lowering energy costs with renewable energy takes leadership from every level of government – from the federal government to Commonwealth government down to county and municipal governments. We all have a role to play,” said **Acting Secretary Shirley**. “DEP and the project team have been working with local governments and will continue with this R-STEP grant.”

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Shapiro Administration Secures Nearly $2 Million for Renewable Energy Planning for Pennsylvania (continued)

Since 2021, DEP has collaborated with the Pennsylvania R-STEP team, investing $270,000 from the State Energy Program (SEP) to provide training and technical assistance to local government officials on planning, siting, and permitting large-scale renewable energy projects. DEP has conducted 26 listening sessions, reaching over 650 officials across all regions of the Commonwealth. These county-level sessions have offered local government practitioners to the opportunity to ask questions about the development of large-scale solar projects and understand the necessary steps to ensure responsible and sustainable implementation.

Topics covered in these sessions include land use and zoning ordinances, site engineering and development, and decommissioning requirements, aiming to balance the concerns of landowners, neighboring property owners, and developers. This initiative also led to the development of the Municipal Officials' Guide to Grid-Scale Solar Development in Pennsylvania. With the R-STEP award, DEP will be able to expand this effort to reach more Pennsylvania communities and residents.

For more information, visit the DEP's website

Source: The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

DEP: Temporary Repair Halts Sewage Release Impacting Susquehanna River near Selinsgrove

Drinking water supplies remain safe. Public advised to continue avoiding contact with water for twenty miles downstream out of caution.

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is announcing that a temporary repair has been completed to a ruptured sewage line, stopping the release of raw sewage near the Eastern Snyder County Regional Authority's (ESCRA) sewage treatment plant in Selinsgrove, Snyder County. The work was performed with DEP oversight by a contractor hired by ESCRA.

A permanent repair is planned to begin tomorrow and is expected to be finalized by the end of day Thursday. Additional sewage may be released during the process of repair.

Public drinking water supplies remain safe and may continue to be used.

Out of an abundance of caution, DEP continues to recommend the public avoid direct contact with the Susquehanna River for 20 miles downstream of Selinsgrove to the Liverpool area in Perry County. This recommendation includes refraining from recreational uses such as fishing, boating, swimming, and wading.

DEP will continue to work with ESCRA to ensure that repairs and cleanup are completed as swiftly as possible.

For more information, visit the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's website.

Source: The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)