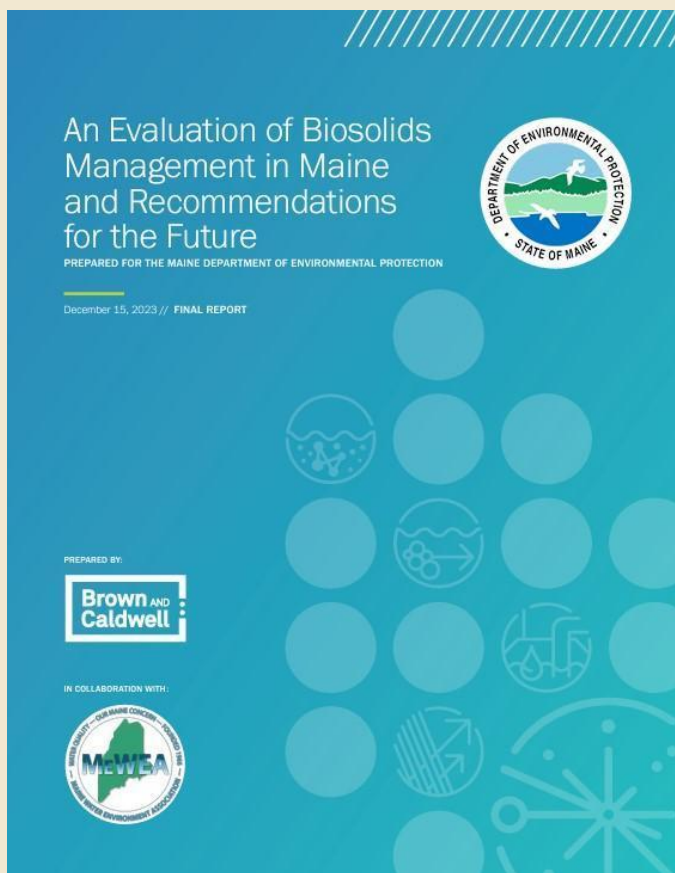




*Distilled biosolids and residuals news from New England and Eastern Canada*

*February 13, 2024*

## Maine Study Documents Uncertainties for Biosolids Management, Recommends State Actions



Back in mid-December, the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (MEDEP) published the

results of a study done by Brown and Caldwell consultants in collaboration with the Maine Water Environment Association (MEWEA). Entitled “An Evaluation of Biosolids Management in Maine and Recommendations for the Future,” the report reviews the series of public policy decisions in Maine that have left water resource recovery facilities (WRRFs) there with only one option for managing their biosolids: disposal in landfill.

[Read more...](#)

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## A Look Back at Top NEBRA News in 2023

2023 was a very busy and productive year for the North East Biosolids & Residuals Association! There were so many major headlines but the biggest news came in November when NEBRA elected its first Canadian President in 26 years. **Lise LeBlanc** of LP Consulting (Nova Scotia, Canada) was elected NEBRA President at the annual membership meeting on November 1st in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Under the heavily revised NEBRA bylaws, also approved by members at that meeting, **Eryka Clive** of Resource Management, Inc. (Holderness, NH) became the first NEBRA President-Elect filling the new position created by the bylaws changes. **Philip Tucker** of the York Sewer District (York, Maine) came aboard as Vice President. NEBRA welcomed another Maine utility member to the Board in 2023: **Scott Firmin** of Portland Water District.

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## Residuals to the Rescue: Leaning into the growing demand for agricultural carbon credits

*Anna Meyer for NEBRA*



Carbon markets hold enormous potential for biosolids and other residuals. When farmers use fewer synthetic fertilizers and more biosolids, or wood ash instead of lime, they not only avoid significant greenhouse gas emissions, but they also rebuild depleted soil organic carbon. These changes offset emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG). In addition to a need to offset GHG from ubiquitous modern sources including agriculture and wastewater treatment, there is growing global demand for the commodification of these climate-change-mitigating activities into carbon credits, which can be purchased by big GHG emitters looking to cut down their net footprints without changing their practices.

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## NEWEA Conference Showcased Some Great Work by NEBRA and its Members





*Photos courtesy of NEWEA, C. Tyler, and R. Wells*

The annual conference of the New England Water Environment Association (NEWEA) took place in Boston last month with attendance numbers back to – and even better than – pre-COVID days. More than 2,700 clean water professionals turned out for the event which was held from January 21st through January 24th. NEWEA and lots of its members participated in activities that included big picture policy discussions, technical sessions, the trade show, NEWEA committee meetings and more.

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## En Bref -- In Brief

### **Sewage Sludge/Biosolids 2023 Reports due February 20th**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Biosolids Program's annual biosolids electronic reports for 2023 are due on February 20th (not the 19th, due to the holiday). The reports are required by the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Electronic Reporting Rule (40 CFR Part 127) and must be submitted via EPA's NETBIO, through the Central Data Exchange (CDX). [CDX Home](#) | [Central Data Exchange](#) | [US EPA](#). Visit the EPA website for the user guide, training and other information specific to annual biosolids reporting: [NPDES eReporting Tool \(NeT\) Help Center - Biosolids Training Schedule](#) ([servicenowservices.com](https://servicenowservices.com)).

### **EPA Issues 2nd Annual Progress Report on PFAS Strategic Roadmap**

In late December, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued its second annual report on its progress in achieving the goals and tactics set out in its 2021 PFAS Strategic Roadmap. The 14-page [report](#) describes EPA's efforts over the last two years to Restrict, Remediate, and Research PFAS in the environment. Some of the significant accomplishments touted by EPA in the progress report include proposed drinking water standards, wastewater Effluent Limitations Guidelines for additional industries, and progress with the risk assessment for PFAS in biosolids. The report states that EPA is "partnering to address the unique challenges of PFAS in biosolids", referring to the [Joint Principles for Preventing and Managing PFAS in Biosolids](#) | [US EPA](#). The report forecasts additional significant actions in 2024 which include:

- Promulgate drinking water standards
- Designate certain PFAS as hazardous under CERCLA and RCRA
- Conduct a study of PFAS through publicly owned treatment facilities to “enable strategic decisions”
- Finalize/codify Method 1633 for analyzing PFAS in other media
- Look at effluent limits for additional industries such as textiles, pulp and paper, and aviation
- Establish aquatic life criteria for PFOA and PFOS
- Update the [Interim Guidance on Destroying and Disposing of Certain PFAS and PFAS-Containing Materials That Are Not Consumer Products | US EPA](#)

### **Method 1633 for PFAS Get Multi-Lab Validation**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)’s Office of Water, Engineering and Analysis Division, in collaboration with the Department of Defense, announced on January 31st, the publication of the multi-laboratory validated method for “Analysis of Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) in Aqueous, Solid, Biosolids, and Tissue Samples by LC-MS/MS” [[method-1633-final-for-web-posting.pdf \(epa.gov\)](#)]. The method has gone through quality assessment at multiple laboratories for analyzing 40 PFAS compounds. The method is not yet required for Clean Water Act monitoring compliance purposes until such time as it get promulgated through formal rulemaking by the EPA. However, EPA is encouraging the use of this method via permits issued under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System. For more information about PFAS analytical methods, go to: <https://www.epa.gov/cwa-methods/cwa-analytical-methods-and-polyfluorinated-alkyl-substances-pfas>.

### **The Interstate Technology & Regulatory Council PFAS Team Welcoming Members**

ITRC’s PFAS team is starting work in January 2024 to develop new resources and is welcoming new team members with interest and expertise in many technical areas relevant for PFAS. The team’s work will go through December 2025. The new PFAS team will focus efforts in the two-year project on:

- Creating new content for priority topics, for example, information about PFAS in Biosolids, Residuals, and Waste Management; new information about PFAS environmental fate and transport; new information for human and ecological health; and technological advances for PFAS analysis, sampling, and monitoring
- Developing new guidance on applying sorption-based technologies for separation and concentration of PFAS
- Updating the external data tables – such as the water and soil values; regulatory programs; analytical methods; and treatment technologies tables
- Continuing to provide in-person and online training including a new series we are developing called “Beyond the Basics”

For more information and to join, go to [PFAS Team - ITRC \(itrcweb.org\)](#).

### **NEBRA Comments on MassDEP Clean Heat Standard Framework**

NEBRA submitted comments back in December 2023 to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) on the proposed framework for the Commonwealth’s Clean Heat Standard (CHS). The CHS will dictate winners and losers in terms of subsidies and incentives for using cleaner fuels for heating. The draft framework did not include renewable natural gas (RNG). The MassDEP’s 2030 Solid Waste Master Plan, issued in October 2021, touts the benefits of anaerobic digestion (AD) as a means of diverting waste and creating new market and business opportunities in the Commonwealth. NEBRA has several utility members producing RNG in the Commonwealth including the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority and the Greater Lawrence Sanitary District (GLSD). GLSD also submitted comments on the draft plan. Seeing a win-win for the waste sector and for the energy sector, NEBRA encouraged MassDEP to reconsider the role of RNG in the CHS program design to ensure the Commonwealth’s priorities are consistent and result in the greatest possible support for expanding AD and reducing greenhouse gases while generating RNG.

## NEBRA Committees Learn from the Experts

Several of NEBRA's committees regularly invite various experts to their meetings to discuss important issues, including the latest on research and regulations. The [Carbon Trading Committee](#) and the [Research Committee](#), in particular, learn from these valuable discussions. And back in January, the [Reg-Leg Committee](#) got a chance to have a conversation about PFAS with attorney Bob Bilott of Dark Waters fame. Maine's York Sewer District (a NEBRA Member) made this important connection as it is moving ahead with a lawsuit against PFAS manufacturers for PFAS in its wastewater -- see [Getting Ready: How York is fighting back against PFAS chemicals \(seacoastonline.com\)](#).

## CHECK IT OUT!! Love, Art, and Wastewater

[Who Gives a Crap Turns Ex's Letters into Toilet Paper This Valentine's Day | LBBOnline](#)

No Valentine's Day tours this year, but you can watch [Blue Man Group at Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Facility - YouTube!](#)

[Flush with creativity: San Diego's sewage system is covered in public art | KPBS Public Media](#)

[There's A Subterranean Garden Hidden Inside A London Sewer \(secretldn.com\)](#)

[Photos: Public works and the common good – Dan Rodricks](#)



## Upcoming Events

**February 23:** Lunch & Learn about [National Grid Programs](#) for Water Resource Recovery Facilities

**March 6:** New Hampshire Water Pollution Control Association's annual [legislative breakfast](#) (Concord, NH)

**March 22:** Lunch & Learn about [Regional Biosolids and Septage Drying Projects](#)

**April 2 - 4:** NEWMOA conference, [The Science of PFAS: Public Health & The Environment](#) (Marlborough, MA)

**April 26:** Lunch & Learn about [EPA's Clean Water Technology Center/SCOWT](#) and Biosolids Program

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

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