**April 23, 2020** 

## **EVENTS...**

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, many events have been cancelled or postponed. Check the NEBRA website for the latest updates.

Roundtable #16 (Anaerobic Digester/Biogas Project Funding Opportunities) will be held on April 24th at Noon. Sign up.

North East Digestion

The Water Research Foundation is hosting a virtual research summit on April 27 (3 - 5 pm EST) focused on COVID-19 surveillance in

sewer sheds. EPA's Office of Research and Development's Water Research webinar series continues with "Water Treatment Modeling

Tools for Removing PFAS and Other Contaminants" on April 29th, 2 pm EST.

skills webinar on April 29th from 2 to 3:30 pm EST. It's International

NEIWPCC is offering a media

**Composting Awareness** Week May 3th through May 9th. For more information and ways to celebrate, visit the Composting Council Research & Education Foundation website.

Clean Water Agencies (NACWA)'s National Pretreatment Workshop has been condensed into a complimentary virtual event on May 12th and 13th.

The National Association of

More events...

### Biosolids Digital Conference Starting on May 5th, members can get access to recorded

WEF Residuals &

presentations covering a range of topics including: The Science of PFAS **Biosolids Management** 

Advanced Topics in Anaerobic

Success Stories

Digestion **Energy Production** Codigestion of Food Waste and Sludge Nutrient Recovery. In addition, there will be a live workshop on May12th on

Emerging Contaminants in Biosolids". More info.

"Communicating about

#### #135: Considerations for Decision-Makers at Utilities

**CHECK IT OUT:** 

WEF's Words on Water

Responding to the Coronavirus. Hosted by George Hawkins of Moonshot Missions, interviews with several water utility leaders. Overview of the Coronavirus, Transmission, and Operations Planning, a

well-done webinar hosted

and recorded by the Californa Water Environment Association on April 1st. Smithsonian Magazine article "How Epidemics of the Past Changed the Way Americans Lived" including innovations

in infrastructure, education, fundraising and civic debate.

URI's Metcalf Institute is offering a free webinar series called "COVID-19 in Context: News Coverage and News Literacy in Uncertain Times". The May 5th session will be about "Countering Misinformation in

a Crisis".

proud.

dye.

this calculator to see how much TP you will need if guarantined and/or how long your current supply will last. TP shortages are creating interest in "smart" toilet

innovations that would make

inventor Thomas Crapper

If you are worried about your

toilet paper supply, try using

Biologist Tagide deCarvalho's picture of a Water Bear under the microscope has been named "Global Image of the Year" for 2019. The tardigrade in deCarvahlo's picture is beautifully

illuminated with fluorescent

Canadian

to the Water

**Biosllids** Conference Call for **Abstracts** Due May 15th. For more information, go

**Environment Association** 

of Ontario website.

@nebiosolids **Calendar** Join NEBRA.

**Maritime Provinces** Water & Wastewater

**Association** 

SPONSORS of

www.nebiosolids.org

**Lystek** 

<u>Agresource</u>

**CDM Smith** 

**Synagro Northeast** 

**Resource Management** 

Inc.

**NEFCO Casella Organics** 

**Northern Tilth** 

**Stantec** 

**THANK YOU!** 

Past news stories are available on the NEBRA website "News" page.

**NEWS from NEBRA** 



# **COVID-19: Latest Research Updates on SARS-CoV-2** and Wastewater

Staying informed is very important at this time when everyone is busy responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. With that in mind, the Water Research Foundation held a second webcast on April 16th to review the latest research specific to SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, and wastewater treatment systems. Interest in this topic is very high — over 3,500 people logged on to this webcast.

Read more.



# **Recycling in Vermont** Review of PFAS Data from VT Land Application Sites **Underway**

#### On April 7th, NEBRA submitted comments on the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (VTDEC)'s final Solid Waste Management

comment letter urges policy-makers and legislators to consider "the big picture" of environmental sustainability when it comes to biosolids management. In Vermont and other states, there has been focus on some small risks, and assumptions have been made leading to evermore conservative regulations that discourage recycling to soils, thus negating the many benefits of biosolids and adding to landfill disposal and methane (greenhouse gas) emissions. On April 13th, VT Digger published an article about PFAS-contaminated groundwater at a few biosolids land application sites in Vermont. NEBRA has been reviewing the VTDEC soil and groundwater data that both VT

Digger and NEBRA received on April 3rd. So far, that review finds that at

Rules which include significant updates to biosolids regulations. The

least one detection of Vermont-regulated PFAS at these few biosolids fields has a confounding factor. And the testing did not include testing of non-biosolids ("control") fields nearby. While biosolids use is likely a source of some of the PFAS, there are other sources of these kinds of low levels of PFAS in the environment. NEBRA is collecting more information to better understand the particular circumstances at each site. More... **Clean Water Professionals Play Big Part** 

#### Thanks to clean water operators all around the region, we are better protected from SARS-CoV-2 and other infectious diseases. Finally, it seems the profession is getting some respect and admiration. There

has been a lot more positive press about wastewater operations

in COVID-19 Response and Recovery

recently. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Andrew Wheeler wrote a <u>letter</u> to the Governors in all 50 states at the end of March regarding the essential nature of drinking water and wastewater operations. "Ensuring that all Americans have clean and safe water is a high priority for the agency and I want to thank the water sector for their courageous efforts at a time when workforces are being challenged and stretched,"

said Administrator Andrew Wheeler. "Having fully operational drinking

water and wastewater services is critical to containing COVID-19 and

protecting Americans from other public health risks. Our nation's water and wastewater employees are everyday heroes who are on the frontline of protecting human health and the environment every single day." Not only do Water Resource Recovery Facilities (WRRFs) act as a barrier to COVID-19 entering the water cycle, they can be play a major role in the response and recovery efforts. Thanks to these "everyday" heros" we will get through this novel coronavirus pandemic and maybe come out of it even better – especially if economic stimulus money can

Up close, coronavirus looks like a tiny king! See all those little crowns? Let's pretend his name is King Covid.

LOOK AT ALL

be directed to important water infrastructure projects.



# NEBRA, along with the New England Warter Environment Association, the Water Environment Federation (WEF), the National Asociation of

#### 2. Strengthen water utilities of all sizes: 3. Close the water access gap; and 4. Fuel economic recovery by investing in water systems

1. Ensure water is reliable and affordable for all;

include water infrastructure projects.

Let's make sure that 4th principle gets some attention during Water Week 2020. WEF is still hosting virtual events and encouraging its members to keep or make appointments to speak with their Congressional representatives virtually. In addition to COVID-19related funding needed for utilities and rate payers impacted by the

pandemic, there's been talk -- which should be encouraged - of a

COVID-19 Economic Stimulus capital projects package which needs to

Clean Water Agencies, and numerous NEBRA member organizations

<u>Principles to Secure Water Future</u>. The four main principles are:

have signed on to One Water's COVID-19 Relief and Recovery Guiding

**Planning Task Force** At its meeting on April 8th, the NEBRA Board of Directors had a discussion about COVID-19 impacts on NEBRA members and the organization. The biggest concern raised was the impact on biosolids end markets, especially landfill disposal. Although it appears the supply of biosolids will remain constant, there are observed decreases in construction and demolition (C&D) wastes going to landfill. Some states in the region have banned all C&D, at least temporarily under COVID-19 conditions. Because C&D is needed to mix with wetter

biosolids in order to provide slope stability, a decrease in C&D will

restrict how much biosolids can be accepted by landfills. A concern in

Canada -- at least for the provices with well establishged composting

programs -- is that the supply of cement kiln ash, a key ingredient in

compost, has decreased significantly with many cement plants shut

**NEBRA Board Establishes COVID-19 Contingency** 

down due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to these concerns, NEBRA Chairman Tom Schwartz has established a "COVID-19 Biosolids Contingency Planning" Task Force to look at COVID-19 impacts on the biosolids market and come up with recommendations for temporary biosolids outlets/management options in the Northeast region if needed to respond to expected market disruptions. The effort will also likely include discussions of other current market stressors such as PFAS. The Task Force includes representatives from biosolids management companies in the U.S. and Canada as well as several utilities and engineering consultants. The first Task Force meeting is April 27th. Composting in the Time of Covid

# the U.S. Composting Council offered a series of webinar on "Composting in the time of COVID" which are available on USCC's

website. Part 1 was titled "Reviewing Safe Procedures for Composting Feedstocks with Possible Coronavirus Contamination". In news from North Korea, COVID-19 is affecting the country's production of compost. The North Korean government has compost quotas for its residents but those are not really being "enforced" right

now. According to news sources, the government is distracted by

COVID-19 from providing the normal logistical support for composting

In response to concerns about the SARS-CoV-2 virus and composting,

(e.g., transportation from homes to farms). As a result, the compost is piling up in front of houses and becoming more of a public health concern, discouraging people from meeting their quotas. Every year starting on January 1st, North Korea musters it residents to generate compost for farms typically through April. A decrease in compost generated this year could have an impact on farm yields this year. Closer to home, the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture's new composting regulations went into effect on February 21st. For

# **ITRC Issues Long-Awaited PFAS Technical**

Guidance The Interstate Technology and Regulatory Council (ITRC) has spent the last three years working with a team of over 500 PFAS experts, including Geosyntec's Dr. Rula Deeb and Dr. Jason Conder, to develop a comprehensive Technical and Regulatory guidance document on PFAS. ITRC had previously developed shorter Fact Sheets on key technical concepts, but has now completed the 400page document which, in addition to addressing the technical challenges associated with PFAS, includes case studies and incorporates stakeholder perspectives, The Fact Sheets, guidance document, and online training videos are available at the IRTC PFAS website. (From ITRC news release)

North East Biosolids and Residuals Association (NEBRA) P. O. Box 422 • 26 Greggs Way • Tamworth, NH 03886 USA • 603-323-7654 • info@nebiosolids.org

Subscribe to our email list.

more information, go to MassDAR.