



Distilled biosolids and residuals news for New England and eastern Canada

July 27, 2020

EVENTS...

Maximizing the Value and Opportunity of Biosolids [Webinar Series](#), the Mid-Atlantic Biosolids Association (MABA)'s Online Summer Symposium, **continues through August 4th**.

NEWMOA webinar "[PFAS in Groundwater: Investigation Results in New Hampshire & Considering Soil Leaching](#)" on **July 29th** at 1:30 pm.

The Science and Control of Odors: Part 2, **August 7th**, Noon to 1 pm EST. See [NEBRA Events](#).

The California Association of Sanitation Agencies (CASA)'s Annual Conference "[Meeting the Moment](#)", a virtual event, is **August 12-13**.

August 14th Lunch & Learn About Varcor – an Innovative Solids Handling System (mechanical vapor recompression). See [NEBRA Events](#).

Michigan Water Environment Association's [annual biosolids conference](#) has gone virtual, **August 18 - 20**.

Caltrans is offering a 2-day session on [Best Management Practices](#) for improving roadside revegetation and stormwater quality with compost, **August 26-27**.

August 29th Lunch & Learn About an Innovative PFAS Solids Treatment Technology (using supercritical water oxidation). See [NEBRA Events](#).

The Sustainable Phosphorus Alliance's [Annual Phosphorus Forum](#) will be held virtually this year on **September 30th and October 1st**.

WEFTEC Connect, **October 5-9**, is open for [registration](#). Super Saver rates if registered by August 15th.

[More events...](#)

Chief Operator Wanted

NEBRA member ERSECO (the environmental services arm of Erving Paper Mills) is looking for a licenced wastewater operator to take over from the current Chief Operator who is resigning at the end of the year. ERSECO offers premium pay, competitive benefits and a performance bonus. To express interest or get more information, email hr@ervingpapermill.com.

CHECK IT OUT:

NEBRA Board Member Lise Leblanc writes about how to plan and build a good biosolids management program in the latest [Go with the Flow](#) magazine (p. 26).

FREE [Greenhouse Gas Emissions Calculator](#) for Water Resource Recovery Facilities from the Ontario Water Consortium in collaboration with McMaster University and the University of Waterloo.

New methods being explored to destroy PFAS: [molecular traps](#) and [boron nitride](#) catalysts.

Guinness turns its beer into [fertilizer and biogas](#).

Treatment Facility workers rescue an [owl stuck in a sludge lagoon](#).

Shining example of New Deal-era public works projects: [Art Deco wastewater treatment facility](#) in Austin, Texas (1937).

NASA looking for help in [designing toilets for spaceships](#).

EPA has released a Water Utility [COVID-19 Financial Impact Tool](#).

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THANK YOU!

NEWS from NEBRA

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**W4170 Research Committee Rebutts
OIG Critique of EPA Biosolids Program**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Multistate Research Committee, known as W4170, has completed a scientific rebuttal to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s Office of Inspector General (OIG) report issued in November 2018 titled "EPA unable to assess the impact of unregulated pollutants in land-applied biosolids on human health and the environment." The W4170 is the latest iteration of USDA research committees that have been studying the beneficial use of residuals to improve soil health and protect public and ecosystem health. This research work has been going on for 45 years and helped establish the basis of current EPA biosolids management regulations found in 40 CFR Part 503– the EPA biosolids regulations.

The 2018 OIG report criticized EPA for failure to assess 352 pollutants found in biosolids/residuals, including 61 considered acutely hazardous or defined as hazardous or priority pollutants under other federal environmental laws. Some of the list of pollutants came from EPA's own Biannual Review that is required under Part 503. The OIG report also cited 291 "unlisted" pollutants that, they claimed, EPA had not assessed. The report by W4170 addresses both the listed and unlisted pollutant exposure risks from beneficial reuse of biosolids and tries to put them in perspective.

[Read more and download report in NEBRA News...](#)

Industrial PFAS Contamination Found at a Second Maine Farm

On Friday, July 24th, the [Portland Press Herald reported](#) that a second small dairy farm in Maine has found PFAS contamination in its milk. Such high levels of PFAS are likely from industrial waste or firefighting; municipal biosolids may or may not have conveyed them.

"This latest development is clearly an unusual, extreme situation involving industrial or firefighting contamination," explains Ned Beecher of NEBRA, who, for the past 3 ½ years, has helped lead nationwide efforts to understand PFAS related to biosolids.

All biosolids contain some traces of PFAS, because these chemicals are used in myriad products in our daily lives and have been since the mid-1900s.

The Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry (ME DACF) agrees that this current finding is an anomaly. [Read more...](#)

There's still time to submit an abstract!

Planning continues for our annual Northeast Residuals & Biosolids Conference with the New England Water Environment Association. Abstracts are being sought on the following topics:

- * COVID-19 Residuals Management Impacts
- * PFAS Research and Impacts to Residuals programs
- * Residuals Master Planning and Co-digestion
- * Odor and Impacts on End Use

Deadline is July 31st. For more information about the conference, go to the NEWEA [website](#).

[Submit Abstract](#)



Residuals Management in Quebec

In the big picture and for many years now, the province of Quebec has been more committed to recycling organics than anywhere in New England. Quebec employs a significant tax on each ton of biosolids or other organic waste going to landfill, and they use those tax monies to support things like anaerobic digestion and composting. Quebec also has an enviable program for independent, third party analysis/certification of biosolids and residuals products.

Quebec recently proposed revisions to a large number of environmental regulations, including new standards impacting biosolids and residuals. The comment period has closed and the environmental Ministry (Ministère de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les Changements Climatique, or MELCC) is reviewing and analyzing the public comments received several months ago now. The new regulations are expected to be promulgated by the end of the year. [More...](#)

In Brief / en bref...

MassDEP to Begin Stakeholder Process for PFAS Regulations

In a July 16th letter from Stephanie Cooper, Deputy Commissioner for Policy and Planning with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP), NEBRA was invited to participate in the upcoming stakeholder process related to PFAS in biosolids/residuals. The introductory paragraph of the invitation letter states "Given that residuals from wastewater and other sources are known to contain PFAS, and that land application of residuals could result in contamination of drinking water sources, food chain crops, or surface waters, MassDEP is building a comprehensive strategy to address PFAS in residuals." NEBRA has designated Executive Director Janine Burke-Wells as its official representative to the stakeholder process however several Board members are expected to attend and participate in the meetings. The first meeting is being scheduled for late July/early August. There will be a second meeting later. According to MassDEP, meeting topics are expected to include regulation of residuals in Massachusetts, available data and information on PFAS in residuals, long-term data needs, considerations for the residuals market in Massachusetts, and potential regulatory approaches for addressing PFAS in residuals.

NEBRA Has New Research Committee Chair

At the end of June, NEBRA's Board of Directors appointed **Tracy Chouinard, PhD., P.E.**, of Brown and Caldwell, to chair the Research Committee. Dr. Chouinard is an alumni of the University of North Carolina. She performed postdoctoral research for the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission related to the PUC's water, power, and sewer divisions. She specializes in anaerobic digestion and biogas production. She presented on the topic of [sludge rheology](#) at the 2019 annual conference. Dr. Chouinard takes over Chairly Alix who remains on the Board of Directors and has played a major role in getting the new chair up to speed. Dr. Chouinard has developed a charge for the committee with plans to assist NEBRA members by creating a searchable database of research articles and abstracts. Other Committee goals include an annual research-based feature article for NEBRAMail and an annual research webinar. The Research Committee will be meeting on **August 26th at Noon**. Anyone interested in joining the Research Committee, please email the [NEBRA office](#) or the new Committee Chair [Tracy Chouinard](#).

USDOE Funding Opportunity for WRRF Technology Pilots

From the Water Environment Federation (WEF) -- The U.S. Department of Energy has released a [Funding Opportunity Announcement](#) (FOA) for Research and Development (R&D) for Advanced Water Resource Recovery Systems. The FOA is a \$20 million opportunity for R&D and piloting of new technologies. WEF wanted to share this wastewater utilities are implementing at their water resource recovery facilities.

The concept papers (pre-proposals) are due **August 4, 2020** at 5 PM ET. Of interest is Topic Area 2: Piloting of Emerging Technologies (described on page 8 of the FOA) which can fund up to \$2 million per pilot project. If a utility or team of FOA applicants is interested in being welcomed to reach out to any of the [staff at WEF's Water Science & Engineering Center](#) to discuss a letter of support from WEF to help with the collaboration and dissemination of results from the pilot.

NEBRA-Backed PFAS Fate & Transport Model Included in Updated Report

Back in March, Arcadis completed a report for the National Council of Air and Stream Improvement (NCASI), WEF, NACWA and the American Forest and Paper Association, titled "Review of Models for Evaluating Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances in Land Applied Residuals and Biosolids (an assessment of Fate and Transport models for groundwater leaching, surface water runoff, and plant uptake)." The initial report, issued in March 2020, seemed to dismiss the pesticide application model PRZM that was the basis of the PFAS leaching model work done by Stone Environmental (Montpelier, VT) for NEBRA in 2019. NEBRA subsequently organized a meeting with the report authors and Stone Environmental to discuss the PRZM model and its usefulness in assessing the fate and transport of PFAS in land-applied biosolids. After learning much more about PRZM, NCASI and Arcadis agreed that the PRZM model, which is free and used widely in permitting through the federal EPA, is useful for assessing the fate and transport of PFAS in agricultural settings to predict groundwater leaching impacts. The PRZM model may not be as robust as other commercial software packages but it works well for screening purposes. The authors report subsequently revised the report in June (version 1.1). A copy of the report as well as information about the Stone model are available on NEBRA's member-only website.

