



Distilled biosolids and residuals news from New England and Eastern Canada

December 29, 2022

A Story That Does Not Smell Good

PFAS Pandemonium Crosses the Border with Controversial Reporting by Radio-Canada

Two controversial news stories in Canada have given biosolids a black eye, once again. The publicly-funded Radio-Canada organization produced two stories focused on per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in biosolids. The stories, aired less than a week apart, were especially focused on Maine's ban of land application of biosolids and the importation of Maine biosolids into Quebec for recycling to the soil. The stories ask many good questions that a lot of the Northeast states like Maine have been asking for a while now but is yet another example of slanted, one-sided reporting when it comes to the topic of biosolids.

On November 26th, Radio-Canada's La Semaine Verte – the "Green Week" show, included a [24-minute story](#) about land application of biosolids in Quebec. This story included the perspective of the provincial regulator in Quebec, the Ministère de l'Environnement Lutte Contre Les Changement Climatiques, Faune et Parcs ([MELCCFP](#)) – loosely translated: the Minister of the Environment, Fight Against Climate Change, Wildlife and Parks – and planted the seed, so to speak, for the story that would follow on the December 1st edition of Enquête, another Radio-Canada program. The Enquête piece was a [43-minute segment](#) titled "Une histoire qui ne sent pas bon..." which in English means "A Story That Does Not Smell Good." Turns out that is a pretty good title for the story.

[Read more...](#)

Wastewater Surveillance Increasing, COVID in Wastewater Rising Again

Our sewers are seeing an increase in concentrations of the SARS-CoV-2 virus RNA as we are in the middle of the holiday season. Officials are warning people to continue to be vigilant about COVID at this time of year. In addition to holiday get-togethers, new COVID subvariants are blamed for the increasing detections of COVID in sewer systems like Boston. NBC Boston's "COVID Questions and Answers" segment (about 21 minutes) recently featured Wastewater-Based Epidemiology (WBE): [MA COVID Wastewater: Boston Doctors Explain if Rise Indicates Surge – NBC Boston](#). As a result, Boston is considering [reinstating mask mandates](#) for public spaces.

WBE is continuing to prove useful for public health purposes. The Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) has continued to collect and analyze its wastewater samples for COVID (check out [MWRA - Wastewater COVID-19 Tracking](#)). With increases in COVID detections, Boston is expanding its [detection network within the sewer system](#). The Maine CDC has a webpage compiling the most recent data for all the WRRFs in Maine that are participating – and it's a lot! New Hampshire plans to do the same: [N.H. COVID data site will soon include wastewater tracking | New Hampshire Public Radio \(nhpr.org\)](#)

[Read more](#)

PFAS News and Updates

Leading the headlines this month, is the [announcement](#) that 3M Co, one of the major producers of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), will stop manufacturing them by 2025. Following years of calls for source reduction, and facing major liabilities, 3M saw no future in continuing with that "portfolio". Numerous organizations have called for [phase outs](#) and outright [bans](#) on PFAS. 3M and other manufacturers of PFAS are facing significant liabilities for past PFAS contamination. States are suing to recover PFAS-related damages; the latest example being Michigan [suing a paper company](#) for contaminating its compost with PFAS.

Most recently, on December 23rd, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published the Biosolids [Biennial Report No. 9 \(Reporting Period 2020-2021\) | US EPA](#). These biennial reviews and sewage sludge surveys are required under Section 405(d) of the Clean Water Act and are the first step in the risk assessment process for pollutants in biosolids. The EPA conducts a rigorous literature search of peer-reviewed scientific publications related to pollutants in biosolids, in this case for the biennium starting January 1, 2020, and ending December 31, 2021. In this report, EPA has identified 13 new chemicals in biosolids including three PFAS, nine drugs (such as Fentanyl and Methadone) and one element (Bromide).

[Read more](#)

Midwest States Form Their Own Biosolids Association

A small group of utilities from the Midwest met back in May at the Water Environment Federation's Residuals & Biosolids Conference in Columbus, Ohio, to discuss the possible formation of a biosolids-focused advocacy organization like the North East Biosolids & Residuals Association for their area of the country, to provide a stronger voice in support of responsible biosolids management. In short order following that preliminary meeting, the Midwest Biosolids Association (MBA) was incorporated in Illinois on October 21st to represent the interests of biosolids managers in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, Wisconsin, and South Dakota.

NEBRA and the other biosolids associations assisted MBA with their start up efforts. "We were happy to help," said NEBRA executive director Janine Burke-Wells. "It's so important to have an organization focused just on biosolids! Despite decades of research and experience in managing them, there continue to be challenges to all end uses. We need more voices advocating for research and sustainable management methods and for recovering all the resources we can from wastewater biosolids."

[Read more...](#)

En Bref -- In Brief

Year of Poo -- We Barely Knew You!

The year 2022 was memorable thanks to The Year of Poo [Home - 2022 Year of Poo](#). If you didn't keep up with the flush of activities, you can catch up on the website or follow it on social media [PooandU \(@PooandU\) / Twitter](#). The Water Environment Federation plans to continue to post about The Year of Poo into 2023 – follow WEF Biosolids on [LinkedIn](#) so you don't miss a thing. We loved the Fun Fecal Facts and especially the Friday Flushes! If you didn't see it yet, Friday Flush #11, the interview with [BioCycle editor Nora Goldstein](#), is priceless. To hear more about WEF's biosolids communications efforts – including the Year of Poo -- listen to this 14-minute [interview](#) with Maile Lono-Batura, WEF's Director of Sustainable Biosolids Programs.

MABA Summer Symposium – Abstracts Due February 15th

The Mid-Atlantic Biosolids Association is calling for abstracts for presentations for its 2023 Summer Symposium, scheduled for July 19-20, in New York State (to be determined). The Symposium will cover biosolids-related innovations and technologies as well as current best practices. Some of the suggested topics include: Research & Innovations; Case Studies/Lessons Learned; Small Scale Biosolids Treatment Systems; Thickening & Dewatering; Thermal Processes and Biochar; Digestion & Stabilization; Regulatory and Other Program Drivers; Land Application and Biosolids Markets; and Sustainability and Resource Recovery. Abstracts are limited to 1,000 words. One additional page may be submitted with tables and/or graphics. Abstracts should be sent via email to [Mary Firestone](#) no later than **8 p.m. ET, Wednesday, February 15, 2023**. For more information, go to [MABA 2023 Summer Symposium \(mabiosolids.org\)](#).

Outgoing MassDEP Commissioner to Direct NEWMOA

On December 15th, the North East Waste Management Officials Association announced that the Board selected **Martin Suuberg** to be NEWMOA's new Executive Director. NEWMOA expects a smooth transition as Mr. Suuberg is quite familiar with NEWMOA and its work. He is an attorney with a law degree from Georgetown University and has worked for the Massachusetts Department of Environment Protection for several decades, serving as Commissioner for the last eight years. Many NEBRA members from Massachusetts got to know "Marty" better during COVID when he initiated regular meetings with water resource recovery facility leaders, enhancing communications at a critical time for public health. He helped ensure operators got what they needed for uninterrupted clean water services. Suuberg recently received an EPA Region I [Environmental Merit Award](#). He started his new role with NEWMOA on January 23, 2023, taking over for long-time Executive Director [Terri Goldberg](#).

Department of Energy Funding Opportunity Announcement

The Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy [announced](#) the availability of \$23 million in funding for Research, Development, and Demonstration projects to decarbonize the entire lifecycle of water resource recovery facilities ([DE-FOA-0002855](#)). Minimum grants are expected to range from \$2 million to \$4 million, depending on the category, with project durations from 36 to 60 months. Proposals for technologies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions can be for unit processes or entire process trains. A complimentary goal is to save costs for WRRFs, including energy and sludge management expenses. The Concept Paper Submission Deadline is **January 27, 2023 5:00 PM ET**. The Full Application Submission Deadline is April 3rd.

Biochar Bills to Watch

The Biochar Research Network Act of 2022 was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives back in July as [H.R. 8596](#) with a companion bill introduced in the Senate in September as [S.4895](#). Representative Chellie Pingree of Maine and Representative Ann Custer of New Hampshire co-sponsored the bill in the House. The bills propose to amend the Agricultural Research Extension and Education Reform Act of 1998 to establish a national biochar research network. The bills provide for \$50 million in funding for fiscal years 2023 through 2028 for up to 20 research sites to look at all types of biochar in all types of soils, assess its carbon sequestration potential and impacts on soil health and crop production, and deliver science-based and practical information to interested parties such as farmers, ranchers, foresters, land reclamation managers, and others. H.R.8594 was referred to the Committee on Agriculture's Subcommittee on Biotechnology, Horticulture, and Research. The Senate bill is being considered by the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

From the NEBRA Archives – History of the Word "Biosolids"

According to extensive information compiled on NEBRA's website, the word "biosolids" came into being in the early 1990s after WEF held a [contest](#) to come up with a more precise term for treated and tested sewage sludge that can be beneficially used. The result of the contest was the term "biosolids." The word came from a University of Arizona professor doing research on trickling filters; his explanation: "you have solids coming into a treatment plant and you put them through a biological treatment process - therefore you have a 'biosolid.'" In 1998, a definition of "biosolid" was included in the [Merriam-Webster](#) dictionary. That same year, the New Oxford Dictionary of English included the term "biosolids". Because of the difficulty of revising federal law and regulatory language, the U.S. EPA has never officially adopted the term "biosolids," but it is, nevertheless, widely used in agency documents and on the EPA website. Many states have since adopted the term. To read more about the word biosolids, go to the NEBRA [webpage](#).

CHECK IT OUT!!

Viewpoint with Dennis Quaid about [Biosolids](#) -- share with all your friends and watch for it on public television!

Humorous documentary about our impact on the planet: <https://twitter.com/shitsavesworld>.

"[Sewer Divers](#)" premiers on the Discovery Channel, January 1st.

Nice service, Barcelona! [Dropped your keys down the sewage drain? Barcelona has a special rescue team for that | TheMayor.EU](#)

"[Spider Robots](#)" to take over inspecting sewers?

[Self-healing concrete](#) for repairing sewer pipes?



Upcoming Events

- January 9: NEWMOA webinar on recycling gypsum wallboard ([Part 1](#))
- January 22-25: NEWMOA [Annual Conference](#) in Boston
- January 24: NEWMOA webinar on recycling gypsum wallboard ([Part 2](#))
- January 27: Lunch & Learn about Energy Reduction with [Thermal Drying](#),
- January 27: Construction & Demolition Materials Management Summit ([EBCNE](#))
- January 31 - February 2nd: Maine Water Utilities Association [Trade Show and Conference](#)
- February 24: Lunch & Learn about [Hydrothermal Liquefaction](#)
- March 24th: Lunch & Learn about [Hydrothermal Carbonization](#)

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

Thanks to our website sponsors!!



WATER + ENVIRONMENT + TRANSPORTATION + ENERGY + FACILITIES



YOUR PARTNER FOR A CLEANER, GREENER WORLD



Got this as a forward? [Sign up](#) to receive our future emails.
View this email [online](#).

P. O. Box 207 | Hope, RI 02831 US

This email was sent to .

To continue receiving our emails, add us to your address book.

emma

[Subscribe](#) to our email list.