

Denise Benjamin Sirmons, Esquire, Appointed Director of EPA's Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization

Denise Benjamin Sirmons will serve as the Director of the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) and will be responsible for leading EPA's efforts to advance the business, regulatory and environmental compliance concerns of small and disadvantaged businesses. She will work closely with the U.S. Small Business Administration for the betterment of the small business community as well as assisting in the goal of increasing small business participation in the federal procurement process.

Denise has served in various leadership positions at the EPA, including in the Office of Diversity, Advisory Committee Management and Outreach, Office of Grants and Debarment, and the Office of Acquisition Management. Before joining the EPA, Denise was the Assistant General Counsel for Contracting at the U.S. Small Business Administration, and worked as a litigator for a major national law firm.

Denise holds a Master of Laws Degree in Government Procurement Law, with Honors, from George Washington University Law School. She also earned a Juris Doctor, cum laude, from Howard University Law School, and a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science from McGill University in Montreal, Canada. She is the recipient of several awards, including the Patricia A. Tobin Government Contracts Award. She has also published articles in the Public Contract Law Journal and the Howard Law Journal.



Denise Benjamin Sirmons

DOE and USDA Issue Notice of Intent for Biomass Research and Development Initiative

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy's (EERE's) Bioenergy Technologies Office in coordination with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) is announcing its **intent to issue** a Request for Applications (RFA) through the Biomass Research and Development Initiative. Projects funded through this RFA, titled "Fiscal Year 17 Biomass Research and Development Initiative (BRDI)," will help develop economically and environmentally sustainable sources of renewable biomass, increase the availability of renewable fuels and biobased products and diversify our energy portfolio. Get more information at:

<https://energy.gov/eere/bioenergy/articles/doe-and-usda-issue-notice-intent-biomass-research-and-development-initiative>

**DO YOU HAVE ARTICLES FOR THE
SMALLBIZ@EPA NEWSLETTER?
FORWARD TO: ELNORA THOMPSON AT:
THOMPSON.ELNORA@EPA.GOV
EPA'S OMBUDSMAN,
JOAN B. ROGERS AT:
ROGERS.JOANB@EPA.GOV**

City of Tyler, Texas, has Agreed to Extensive Sewer System Upgrades and Operational Improvements to Comply with Clean Water Act

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced the city of Tyler, Texas, agreed to significantly upgrade its sanitary sewer system to resolve alleged violations of the federal Clean Water Act (CWA). The city will also undertake extensive operational improvements to its sanitary sewer system and pay a total of \$563,000 in civil penalties. DOJ, on behalf of the EPA and the State of Texas on behalf of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, jointly filed a complaint against the city of Tyler alleging that, since 2005, the city has allowed and continues to allow untreated sewage to overflow from the city's sanitary sewer system in violation of the CWA and the Texas Water Code.

The complaint alleges the city failed to properly operate and maintain its sewer system, resulting in problems including blockages in underground pipes, general system defects and power failures. These problems can impact public health and local water quality by allowing releases of untreated sewage into local waterways and the community. The complaint specifically alleges instances of raw sewage entering into both local waterways and into Tyler residents' private homes and yards. Many of these sanitary sewer overflows occurred in low-income and minority communities.

"Providing clean, reliable water service is one of the most important responsibilities cities have to their residents," said EPA Regional Administrator Ron Curry. "Improvements to the city's treatment of wastewater has direct benefit to citizens." The settlement, which will be lodged in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas, is subject to a federal 30-day public comment period. The State of Texas also has a required 30-day public comment period. The proposed consent decree can be viewed online at www.justice.gov/enrd/Consent_Decrees.html. For additional information, go to:

<https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/city-tyler-texas-agrees-extensive-sewer-system-upgrades-and-operational-improvements>



EPA FEDERAL REGISTER NOTICES

SUBJECT: Procedures for Rulemaking Under Section 6 of the Toxic Substances Control Act; Amendment

<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2016-12-21/pdf/2016-30055.pdf>

Federal Register: Vol. 81, No. 245, Wednesday, December 21, 2016/Rules and Regulations

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency

ACTION: Final Rule

SUMMARY: Section 6 of the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) provides EPA with several authorities for addressing risks from chemical substances and includes procedures that EPA must follow in doing so. EPA promulgated regulations shortly after TSCA was enacted to implement the procedural requirements for rulemaking under TSCA section 6 as they existed at that time. This final rule removes the regulations specifying certain procedural requirements for rulemaking under TSCA section 6, including the requirement for a hearing, because TSCA, as amended, no longer mandates those procedures.

SUBJECT: Significant New Use Rule on Certain Chemical Substances; Reopening of Comment Period

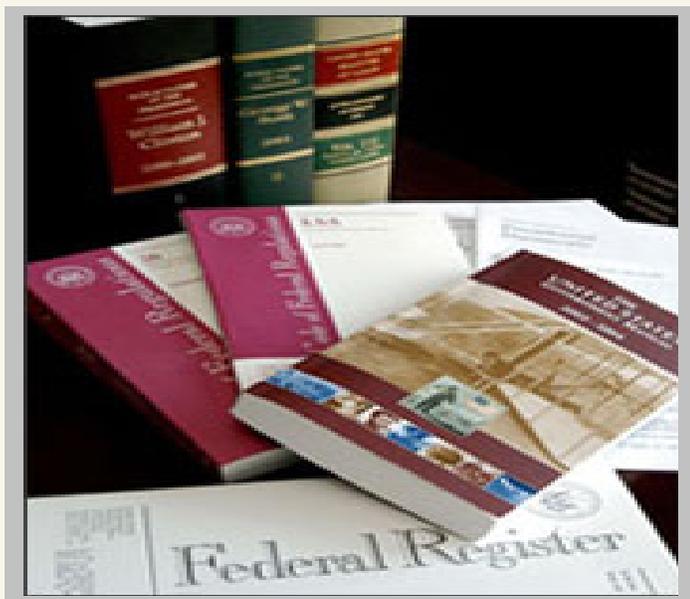
<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2017-01-03/pdf/2016-29755.pdf>

Federal Register: Vol. 82, No. 1, Thursday, January 3, 2017/Proposed Rules

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency

ACTION: Proposed Rule

SUMMARY: EPA issued a proposed rule in the Federal Register of October 27, 2016 proposing significant new use rules (SNURs) under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) for three chemical substances which were the subject of premanufacture notices (PMNs). This document reopens the comment period for 60 days.



SBA Launches 2017 InnovateHER Business Challenge for Innovations That Empower Women's Lives

The U.S. Small Business Administration today announced the launch of the 2017 InnovateHER: Innovating for Women Business Challenge, a nationwide business competition to drive attention and resources to innovative products and services that make our lives easier and longer. Competitors vie for \$70,000 in prize money provided to SBA for the InnovateHER competition through a gift from the Sara Blakely Foundation. Entrepreneurs selected as winners in local competitions will advance to the semi-final round. From the pool of semi-finalists, SBA will select up to 10 finalists who will be invited to the National InnovateHER: Innovating for Women Business Challenge to be held in mid-2017. The finalists will pitch their products and ideas to a panel of expert judges and compete for the top three awards along with \$70,000 in prizes. For more details, go to:

<https://www.sba.gov/about-sba/sba-newsroom/press-releases-media-advisories/sba-launches-2017-innovateher-business>

Visit the 27th Annual Government Procurement Conference in Washington, D.C. April 19, 2017

Exhibitors from Federal, State and local governments, and Federal Government large business prime contractors are looking for small, minority, 8(a), SDB, HUBZone Empowerment Contracting Program participants, service-disabled veteran-owned, veteran-owned, and women-owned businesses who provide the goods and services listed below. Federal agencies post information on contract opportunities over \$25,000 on the Internet through FedBizOpps at <http://www.fedbizopps.gov>

Visit the FedBizOpps website to register for electronic notification of contract opportunities. Subcontracting opportunities with large business prime contractors can be found at <http://web.sba.gov/subnet/>.



<http://www2.epa.gov/resources-small-businesses>

Department of Energy to Sponsor 2017 National Justice Conference and Training Program

Leaders from various sectors will engage in 3 days of free exchange of ideas and approaches to achieving environmental justice. These interactive training sessions will feature voices of experience, research, discussions, and thought-provoking dialogue. The program format will feature the needs and challenges of communities, governments, municipalities, tribes, faith-based organizations, and others with an interest in environmental justice. It will highlight programs and collaborations that work as well as initiatives that have not proven successful. Program speakers will feature representatives from federal and state agencies, local governments, tribes, community groups, business and industry, public interest groups, academia, and other entities.

**Washington Marriott Metro Center,
Washington, D.C
March 8-10, 2017**

To register for the conference, go to:

http://thenejc.org/?page_id=167



**2017 National Environmental Justice Conference
& Training Program**