

SMALLBIZ@EPA

EPA's Asbestos and Small Business Ombuds Program

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR THE REGULATED SMALL BUSINESS COMMUNITY

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POLICY AND REGULATION

EPA Launches New Community-Based Initiative to Help People Access Unprecedented Resources for Local Climate and Environmental Justice Solutions

On November 1, 2023, EPA announced the launch of the Community, Equity & Resiliency initiative, a groundbreaking effort to help communities across the nation navigate EPA's Inflation Reduction Act investments and other new funding opportunities made possible by President Biden's Investing in America agenda. Through this new initiative, EPA's Office of Air and Radiation and Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights will facilitate community-driven partnerships and provide a space for communities to learn, connect, and cultivate ideas on how to access the historic resources, especially in low-income and disadvantaged communities. [Read the press release](#)

Proposed Amendments to Air Toxics Standards for Rubber Tire Manufacturing

EPA proposed amendments to the National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAP) for Rubber Tire Manufacturing. The rubber tire manufacturing source category consists of facilities that produce rubber tire components including, but not limited to, rubber compounds, sidewalls, tread, tire beads, tire cord, and liners. The source category is split into four subcategories: rubber processing, tire production, tire cord production, and puncture sealant application. [Read more on the amendments](#)

New Source Performance Standards Review for Secondary Lead Smelters

EPA finalized amendments to the new source performance standards (NSPS) for secondary lead smelters pursuant to the periodic review required by the Clean Air Act (CAA). Specifically, the EPA is finalizing revisions to the NSPS that applies to affected secondary lead smelters constructed, reconstructed, or modified after December 1, 2022 (NSPS subpart La). The EPA is also finalizing amendments to the NSPS for secondary lead smelters constructed, reconstructed, or modified after June 11, 1973, and on or before December 1, 2022 (NSPS subpart L). In addition, we are finalizing the use of EPA Method 22 (Visual Determination of Fugitive Emissions from Material Sources and Smoke Emissions from Flares) as an alternative for demonstrating compliance with the opacity limit.

This final rule was effective on November 20, 2023. [Read the final rule in the Federal Register](#)

EPA Proposes Stronger Rules to Protect People from Persistent, Bioaccumulative, and Toxic Chemical Exposures

On November 20, 2023, EPA released a proposed rule to further protect people from exposure to two chemicals that are toxic, remain in the environment for long periods of time, and accumulate in the body. Both decabromodiphenyl ether (decaBDE) and phenol, isopropylated phosphate (3:1) (PIP (3:1)) are persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic (PBT) chemicals that were subject to risk management rules under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA).

EPA's proposed rule would impose workplace safety protections and restrict water releases. It would also address broader implementation issues affecting the supply chains of various industry sectors including the nuclear energy sector, transportation, construction, agriculture, forestry, mining, life sciences, and semiconductor production. [Read the press release](#)

EPA Proposes Updates to Strengthen the Safer Choice Standard

On November 13, 2023, EPA announced proposed updates to the Safer Choice Standard, which identifies the requirements that products and their ingredients must meet to earn EPA's Safer Choice label or Design for the Environment (DfE) logo. The Agency is requesting public comments on the proposed updates by January 16, 2024, and will hold a webinar on December 19, 2023, to provide information on proposed updates to the Standard.

The Safer Choice program helps consumers and purchasers for facilities, such as schools and office buildings, find cleaners, detergents, and other products made with chemical ingredients that are safer for human health and the environment. Similarly, the DfE program helps people find disinfectants that meet high standards for human health and the environment. [Read the press release](#)

Biden-Harris Administration Proposes to Strengthen the Lead and Copper Rule to Protect All Communities in America from Lead in Drinking Water

On November 30, 2023, EPA announced a proposal to strengthen its Lead and Copper Rule that would require water systems across the country to replace lead service lines within 10 years. EPA is also proposing additional improvements to protect public health, such as lowering the lead action level and improving sampling protocols utilized by water systems. The proposed action significantly advances President Biden's commitment to remove every lead service line in America to protect children and vulnerable populations from the negative impacts of lead in drinking water, particularly those living in disadvantaged communities. [Read the press release](#)

EPA's Fall 2023 Semiannual Regulatory Agenda

EPA's Fall 2023 Semiannual Agenda and Regulatory Plan is now available as part of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs' Unified Regulatory Agenda. The Agenda provides important public notice and transparency about proposed regulatory and deregulatory actions within the Executive Branch. You can find the active regulatory actions listed by agency here: <https://www.reginfo.gov/public/do/eAgendaMain>.

EPA's Office of Policy will issue the Agency's next regulatory agenda in late spring of 2024.



KEY DATES AND OPPORTUNITIES

EPA Grants Competition Process Webinar

On September 26, 2023, EPA's Office of Grants and Debarment held a live webinar intended to help grant applicants learn how to find and successfully apply for competitive EPA grants. EPA also provided an overview of the competition process from application through evaluation and selection. The webinar recording was posted on November 1, 2023. [View the webinar recording](#)

Small Business Environmental Assistance Programs (SBEAPs) eligible for CPRG Implementation Grants

Did you know the new Climate and Pollution Reduction Grants are now open for applications? Most SBEAPs are eligible and yes, this grant will allow you to help industry pay for pollution reduction equipment. [Read more on the grants](#)

Biden-Harris Administration Announces Availability of \$15 Million to Tackle the Climate Crisis by Cutting Hydrofluorocarbon Pollution as Part of the Investing in America Agenda

On November 17, 2023, EPA announced the availability of approximately \$15 million in grant funding through President Biden's Investing in America agenda for projects that tackle the climate crisis by reclaiming and destroying hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), powerful greenhouse gases. The funding was made possible by President Biden's Inflation Reduction Act—the most ambitious climate law in U.S. history—and includes a \$1.5 million set aside for federally recognized Tribes. [Read the press release](#)

Biden-Harris Administration Awards \$8.8 Million in Funding to Measure Pollution from Wood Heaters as Part of Investing in America Agenda

On November 17, 2023, EPA announced a direct award of \$8.8 million through President Biden's Investing in America Agenda to Northeast States for Coordinated Air Use Management (NESCAUM) and a nationwide network of partner air agencies, including in Alaska, Washington, and Idaho. The grant is provided by President Biden's Inflation Reduction Act—the largest climate investment in history—and will support independent testing and data analysis of emissions from new models of woodstoves and wood heating devices. [Read the press release](#)

Biden-Harris Administration Announces \$2 Billion to Fund Environmental and Climate Justice Community Change Grants as Part of Investing in America Agenda

On November 21, 2023, the Biden-Harris Administration announced approximately \$2 billion in funding available to support community-driven projects that deploy clean energy, strengthen climate resilience, and build capacity for communities to tackle environmental and climate justice challenges. EPA's Community Change Grants are the single largest investment in environmental justice going directly to communities in history, and will advance collaborative efforts to achieve a healthier, safer, and more prosperous future for all. [Read the press release](#)



ASK SBEAP

Dear SBEAP:

I recently learned that my business resides in what might be termed as a historically overburdened or environmental justice region in my city. What exactly does that mean, and how could it affect my business? Will there be any regulatory changes as part of this environmental justice movement? I manage a machining shop and we operate under both an air and hazardous waste permit.

Sincerely,

Eddie Environmental

Dear Eddie:

According to the EPA, environmental justice, or EJ, is defined as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all individuals, regardless of race, color, national origin or income, in relation to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies. The goal of EJ is to safeguard marginalized communities from experiencing disproportionate exposure to pollution and its detrimental health effects.

Regarding your question, no, the regulations are not changing; however, there may be an increase in environmental compliance inspections in your area, thereby raising the likelihood of encountering an air or Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) inspector. We recommend visiting the EPA's [page on enforcement and compliance initiatives](#), which provides details on how the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance is actively working to strengthen enforcement in regions that have EJ concerns. These inspections will primarily focus on six [national compliance initiatives](#)

related to air permits, hazardous waste generation, as well as water and stormwater permits and discharges. This may involve conducting thorough environmental impact assessments, implementing pollution control measures or reevaluating permits.

The [National SBEAP website Environmental Justice page](#) contains resources, including an [informational flyer](#), that are tailored to small businesses related to compliance and enforcement. Taking proactive steps to protect your community can benefit your business by saving money on compliance costs, improving your reputation, and attracting and retaining customers. We encourage you to reach out to your [state SBEAP](#) and the [National SBEAP](#), both of which are committed to empowering small businesses through free, confidential technical assistance needed to seamlessly meet environmental compliance requirements and contribute positively to their communities.



SPOTLIGHT

Biden-Harris Administration Announces State and Tribal Allocations for \$48 Million Grant Program to Protect Groundwater Resources and Tackle Climate Change

On November 2, 2023, EPA announced grant allocations for states and Tribes to tap into over \$48 million in funding through President Biden's Investing in America agenda to develop and implement Underground Injection Control (UIC) Class VI programs. This program is a key part of the Biden-Harris Administration's goal to reach a net zero emissions economy by 2050, particularly for the industrial sector. The \$48,250,000, funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, will be allocated evenly among the 25 interested states and Tribes, with an allotment of \$1,930,000 for each program. Under the Safe Drinking Water Act, Class VI programs ensure that groundwater resources are protected while supporting the permanent sequestration of carbon dioxide (CO₂) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and tackle the climate crisis. [Read the press release](#)

EPA Awards Nearly \$3.2M to Small Businesses to Research Complex Environmental Issues and Help Grow the Green Economy

On November 8, 2023, EPA announced \$3,196,530 in research funding to eight small businesses to further develop and commercialize their environmental technologies. Recipients of this year's Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) funding include companies developing a nature-based treatment for graywater reuse, a system to remotely sense fugitive methane emissions in abandoned wells, field-deployable devices to rapidly screen drinking water for PFAS, and more. [Read the press release](#)



Website :
epa.gov/resources-small-businesses/asbo



Phone :
(800)368-5888



Email :
asbo@epa.gov