

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's Final Rule for Oil and Natural Gas Operations Will Sharply Reduce Methane and Other Harmful Pollution

EPA has issued a final rule that will sharply reduce emissions of methane and other harmful air pollution from oil and natural gas operations — including, for the first time, from existing sources nationwide. The final action includes New Source Performance Standards to reduce methane and smog-forming volatile organic compounds from new, modified, and reconstructed sources. It also includes Emissions Guidelines, which set procedures for states to follow as they develop plans to limit methane from existing sources. Oil and natural gas operations are the largest industrial source of methane pollution in the U.S. [Read the final rule](#)

What They Are Saying: Broad Range of Leaders and Advocates Applaud Biden-Harris Administration’s Proposal to Strengthen the Lead and Copper Rule to Protect Communities 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. In this proposal, EPA also announced additional improvements to protect public health, such as lowering the lead action level and improving sampling protocols utilized by water systems. This 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](#)

Agency Information Collection Activities; Proposed Collection; Comment Request; Air Emission Standards for Tanks, Surface Impoundments

EPA is planning to submit the information collection request (ICR), “Air Emission Standards for Tanks, Surface Impoundments and Containers,” EPA ICR No. 1593.12, OMB Control No. 2060–0318 to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and approval in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA). Before doing so, EPA is soliciting public comments on specific aspects of the proposed information collection as described in **Supplementary Information**. This is a proposed extension of the ICR, which is currently approved through April 30, 2024. This notice allows for 60 days for public comments. Comments must be submitted on or before February 9, 2024. [Read the notice in the Federal Register](#)



KEY DATES AND OPPORTUNITIES

2024 SBEAP Annual Training – Chattanooga, TN

The National Small Business Environmental Assistance Programs is on track to host the 2024 Annual SBEAP Training event March 12-14, 2024, in Chattanooga, Tenn. For the most up to date meeting agenda and registration information go to:

<https://nationalsbeap.org/2024-training>



Community Change Grants Application Guide and Potential Partner Survey, CPRG Phase 2 Application and PCAP Guidance, and Other Federal Funding Opportunities and Guidance

EPA's Environmental and Climate Justice Community Change Grants program (Community Change Grants) will invest approximately \$2 billion dollars in Inflation Reduction Act funds in environmental and climate justice activities to benefit disadvantaged communities through projects that reduce pollution, increase community climate resilience, and build community capacity to respond to environmental and climate justice challenges. [Read about the guide](#)



ASK SBEAP

Dear SBEAP:

As a small business owner, I am concerned about the impact my business has on the environment. How can I effectively reduce my facility's carbon footprint and help mitigate climate change?

Sincerely, Climate Clarence

Dear Clarence:

There are many steps you can take to reduce your facility's climate footprint. The first step is to identify what your facility's current climate footprint looks like by performing internal audits or by hiring a contractor to calculate your footprint for you. Performing audits or hiring a contractor can help you pinpoint specific processes or equipment that make up the majority of your facility's climate impact, allowing you to target your efforts effectively. Two common audits are energy audits and waste audits. Energy audits specifically help identify areas where energy efficiencies can be improved, and waste audits help identify areas where materials handling can be improved.

Your next steps depend on your specific circumstances, but there are several common actions businesses can take. Common energy measures include upgrading to energy-efficient lighting and appliances, improving insulation and HVAC systems, and optimizing production processes to reduce energy waste. You can also consider shifting to renewable energy sources, such as solar or wind power, either by installing on-site renewable energy systems or purchasing green power from your utility provider. Common waste measures include optimizing production processes to reduce waste, changing from disposable materials to reusable ones, and reusing or recycling waste materials internally or externally via third parties.

Beyond these technical measures, fostering a culture of sustainability within your organization can have a significant impact. Encourage employees to engage in energy-saving practices, like turning off equipment when not in use and optimizing the use of natural light. Implementing a recycling program and reducing waste, particularly in areas like packaging and transportation, can further decrease your environmental impact. These changes not only reduce your carbon footprint but often result in cost savings, making your business more sustainable both environmentally and economically. Remember, every step towards sustainability, no matter how small, contributes to the broader effort of climate change mitigation. Your state SBEAP can help. Find your SBEAP on the [National SBEAP state contact map](#) or reach out to National SBEAP directly at info@nationalsbeap.org or 800-578-8898.



EPA Awards Nearly \$2.2M to Small Businesses to Advance Innovative Environmental Technologies

On December 19, 2023, EPA announced \$2,198,867 in research funding to 22 small businesses to develop technologies that will help protect human health and the

environment. The 22 small businesses will use EPA funding to develop their novel projects, including an AI-based mapping tool to support first responders during disasters, a reactor to remove PFAS from sewage waste, and a self-cleaning indoor air purification system for use during wildfires. [Read the press release](#)

EPA's Annual Enforcement Results Shows Significant Increase in Enforcement Activity to Protect Communities from Pollution

On December 18, 2023, EPA announced its Fiscal Year 2023 (FY 2023) Enforcement and Compliance Annual Results, which showed significant increases in on-site inspections, new criminal investigations, civil settlements, and cleanup enforcement, as well as record levels of enforcement activity in environmental justice communities long scarred by pollution. [Read the press release](#)

EPA Enforcement Program Seeks Public Ideas for Supplemental Environmental Projects

On December 7, 2023, EPA announced a new effort to support the public in sharing their ideas for environmentally beneficial projects that could potentially be included in future enforcement settlements. These voluntary environmentally beneficial projects, called Supplemental Environmental Projects (SEPs), bring environmental and public health benefits beyond those required by law to communities impacted by a violation of an environmental law or regulation. [Read the press release](#)



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