



SMALLBIZ@EPA

EPA's Asbestos and Small Business Ombuds Program

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR THE REGULATED SMALL BUSINESS COMMUNITY

February 2026

EPA's Small Business Ombudsman Support

Have a question about a SmallBiz@EPA article or EPA press release? Need help getting to the best regulatory contact, web information, or have a small business item to add to SmallBiz@EPA?

Contact the [ASBO Program](#) through our live hotline service (M-F, 8:30AM - 4:30PM ET) or via [email](#). We're here to help with your small business compliance/enforcement questions and general asbestos concerns.

Contact Us

ASBO Hotline: 800-368-5888

Email: asbo@epa.gov

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POLICY AND REGULATION

Fluoride in Drinking Water

On January 22, 2026, EPA announced the next step in the agency's new human health assessment of fluoride in drinking water by releasing the [Fluoride Human Health Toxicity Assessment: Preliminary Assessment Plan and Literature Survey](#) which is now available for public comment in the Federal Register ([EPA-HQ-OW-2025-3823](#)) until February 27, 2026.

EPA hosted a public informational webinar on January 28, 2026, to discuss the assessment plan as well as next steps ([view the webinar slides](#)).

The announcement follows up on the [April 7, 2025 commitment](#) to expeditiously review new scientific information on potential health risks of fluoride in drinking water.

Comments must be received on or before February 27, 2026.

[Read the Fluoride in Drinking Water press release.](#)

EPA Proposes CWA Section 401 Rule to Streamline Permitting, Unleash Economic Growth, and Protect America's Waterways

On January 13, 2026, EPA announced a proposed rule that would return Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 401 to its proper statutory purpose, protecting water quality while eliminating regulatory overreach that has imposed unnecessary burden on critical infrastructure projects. This proposed rule would fulfill EPA's statutory role to ensure the water quality certification process operates within the clear boundaries established by Congress, maximizing permitting efficiency and eliminating unwarranted delays that have stifled economic growth.

[Read more on the proposed rule in the press release.](#)

Withdrawal of Technical Amendments to the EPCRA Hazardous Chemical Inventory Reporting Requirements to Conform to the 2024 OSHA Hazard Communication Standard

EPA withdrew the direct final rule Technical Amendments to the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) Hazardous Chemical Inventory Reporting Requirements to Conform to the 2024 OSHA Hazard Communication Standard, published in the Federal Register on November 17, 2025.

Effective Date: January 9, 2026

[Read more on the EPCRA final rule in the Federal Register.](#)

Pesticide Tolerances: Permethrin and Pyriofenone

This regulation establishes a tolerance for residues of permethrin in or on the food and feed commodities of dragon fruit (pitaya) as well as crop group expansions to field corn subgroup 15-22C and sweet corn subgroup 15-22D, and crop group conversions to leafy greens subgroup 4-16A, including tolerances for arugula, garden cress, and upland cress.

[Read more on the final permethrin rulemaking in the Federal Register.](#)

A second regulation establishes tolerances for residues of pyriofenone in or on apple; apple, wet pomace; berry, low growing, subgroup 13-07G (except cranberry); and cherry subgroup 12-12A.

Effective Date: January 14, 2026

Objections and requests for hearings must be received on or before March 16, 2026, for both rulemakings.

[Read more on the final pyriofenone rulemaking in the Federal Register.](#)

New Source Performance Standards Review for Stationary Combustion Turbines and Stationary Gas Turbines

EPA finalized amendments to the new source performance standards (NSPS) for stationary combustion turbines and stationary gas turbines pursuant to a review required by the Clean Air Act (CAA). As a result of this review, EPA established subcategories for new, modified, or reconstructed stationary combustion turbines based on size, rates of utilization, design efficiency, and fuel type.

Effective Date: January 15, 2026.

[Read more on the final NSPS rule in the Federal Register.](#)

EPA Solicits Public Comment: Pesticide Petitions Filed for Residues of Pesticide Chemicals in or on Various Commodities

On January 28, 2026, EPA announced it is soliciting public comment on initial filings of pesticide petitions requesting the establishment or modification of regulations for residues of pesticide chemicals in or on various commodities. EPA is providing this notice in accordance with the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (FFDCA) and announces receipt of petitions received in 2025.

Comments must be received on or before February 27, 2026.

[Read more on the petitions in the Federal Register and make a public comment.](#)

Effluent Limitations Guidelines and Standards for the Steam Electric Power Generating Point Source Category-Deadline Extensions; Correction

EPA issued a notice to correct some of the deadlines listed in the final rule, “Effluent Limitations Guidelines and Standards for the Steam Electric Generating Point Source Category—Deadline Extensions,” which published in the Federal Register on December 31, 2025. After publication, the EPA became aware of post-signature typographical errors in the published regulatory text concerning compliance deadlines for pretreatment standards and related reporting recordkeeping requirements in the rule. This correction will ensure that the rule's compliance deadlines and reporting and recordkeeping deadlines match those in the version of the rule signed by the EPA Administrator.

Effective Date: March 2, 2026

[Read more on the final rule in the Federal Register.](#)



KEY DATES & OPPORTUNITIES

EPA Seeks Applicants for Environmental Education Grants

EPA is accepting applications and awarding up to \$3.2 million in funding for environmental education grants to support local, community-driven projects that help Americans protect their water, health, and natural surroundings. EPA expects to award up to 16 grants nationwide, ranging from \$200,000 to \$250,000 each through the [Environmental Education Grant Program](#). Visit the [Environmental Education Grant Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#) and the [EPA Grants Community Library FAQs](#) webpages to learn more about the current competition and the federal grant process.

Applications Deadline: March 3, 2026

[Read more Environmental Education Grants in the press release.](#)

[Apply through the grants.gov portal.](#)

EPA’s Fiscal Year 2026 Grants Training Plan Now Available

EPA’s Office of the Chief Grants Officer has announced the [Fiscal Year 2026 Training Plan](#) is final and available online. The FY26 Training Plan covers two priorities:

1. Training for applicants, recipients, and subrecipients.
2. Training for EPA staff and managers.

For more information, view [EPA’s grant webpage](#) and [subscribe to the EPA Grants Update Listserv](#) to receive periodic updates by email.

EPA Seeks New Members for the Farm, Ranch and Rural Communities Advisory Committee

EPA is accepting nominations to serve on its [Farm, Ranch, and Rural Communities Federal Advisory Committee \(FRRCC\)](#). The FRRCC serves as an advisory body that will address specific topics of unique relevance to agriculture as identified by the Administrator, in such a way as to provide thoughtful advice and useful insights to the agency as it considers environmental policies and programs that affect and engage agriculture and rural communities.

Applications should be submitted to FRRCC@epa.gov by March 2, 2026.

[Read more on the FRRCC and the application process in the press release.](#)



DISCOVER SBEAP

As required under [Section 507 of the 1990 CAA Amendments](#), state Small Business Environmental Assistance Programs (SBEAPs) partner with EPA in providing regulatory compliance assistance to small businesses. Each month, a different state SBEAP is highlighted in the SmallBiz@EPA to help promote cooperative federalism and the essential compliance assistance services SBEAPs provide around the country to the local small business community.

New Hampshire 507 Program in Partnership with NH Automobile Dealers Association

The [New Hampshire Small Business Technical Assistance Program \(SBTAP\)](#), established by the [New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services \(NHDES\)](#) in 1992, continues to be a vital resource for small business owners and operators across the state. Designed to help businesses understand and comply with complex environmental regulations, SBTAP offers free, confidential and non-regulatory assistance tailored to the unique needs of small enterprises.

SBTAP and the [New Hampshire Automobile Dealers Association \(NHADA\)](#) have a strong partnership, teaming together to create a series of [videos on environmental compliance](#) for auto repair, auto body and auto dealerships. Video topics include:

- Shop floor drains.
- Proper thinner recycler use.
- Small quantity generator form overview.
- Best practices for proper disposal of used oil.
- National Small Business Week.
- Small business services in New Hampshire.

While the target audience is the automobile industry, many topics are of interest to other industry sectors. The series includes a promotional assistance video with the [New Hampshire Small Business Development Center](#), SBTAP, and NHADA. These programs offer a unique business assistance service such as environmental compliance, loss prevention, and overall business planning support.

The New Hampshire SBTAP provides a range of services for small businesses of all industry types, including environmental compliance assistance, on-site assessments and consultation services. These offerings help businesses navigate air quality and other environmental requirements, ensuring safe workplaces and promoting sustainable business practices. The program also emphasizes pollution prevention, helping industries such as auto body repair, printing, and wood finishing reduce emissions and waste.

To learn more about the New Hampshire SBTAP and its activities, visit [SBTAP website](#) or contact the NH SBTAP Program Manager, Sara.J.Johnson@des.nh.gov.



SPOTLIGHT

EPA and Montana DEQ Partner in Park City Asbestos Cleanup

Following the initial response by the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and local officials, EPA has coordinated with DEQ to support cleanup of asbestos-contaminated debris from the windstorm in Park City on December 17, 2025. After storm-related damage was identified to Park City Schools and DEQ issued an emergency permit to allow for repairs and asbestos abatement activities on the school property. After abatement is complete, the district will conduct air sampling inside the school to verify conditions are appropriate and safe for re-occupancy. EPA has established an informational [webpage dedicated to the Park City cleanup available online](#) and project updates will be posted regularly under the “Notices” section.

EPA Closes 2025 with Significant Progress Remediating Residential Yards in Region 7

EPA has announced significant progress remediating lead-contaminated properties throughout EPA Region 7, marking more environmental cleanup milestones in the nation’s heartland. During 2025, EPA Region 7 cleaned up over 775 residential properties and removed 1,098,965 cubic yards of waste. In 2025, EPA Region 7 awarded \$3.3 million in cooperative agreements to six county health departments throughout the Old Lead Belt, the Tri-State Mining District, and to the Douglas County Health Department in Nebraska. EPA Region 7 will continue its work remediating residential yards impacted by lead mining and removing mine waste from local communities throughout the heartland.

[Read more on the Region 7 remediation progress in the press release.](#)

EPA Hosts Roundtable Discussion with Data Center Coalition on Clean Air Resources and Energy Reliability

On January 20, 2026, EPA held a roundtable with the Data Center Coalition, led by senior Trump EPA officials, to discuss how the rapid growth of data centers can be harnessed to make the U.S. the AI capital of the world while keeping energy prices low and ensuring clean air, land, and water for all Americans. During the discussion, EPA program office leaders detailed regulatory and operational considerations related to the nationwide data center build-out, including clean air requirements and ensuring grid reliability, and officials also hit on the valid concerns in many communities about data center development and what the agency is doing to ensure these concerns are appropriately addressed.

[Read more on the AI roundtable discussion in the press release.](#)

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