



SMALLBIZ@EPA

EPA's Asbestos and Small Business Ombuds Program

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR THE REGULATED SMALL BUSINESS COMMUNITY

August 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 REGULATIONS

EPA Implements New “Freedom to Fix” Presidential Memorandum; Gives SEMA Greenlight to Certify Aftermarket Products

On July 1, 2026, President Trump’s new memorandum, “Lowering the Cost of Living by Promoting the Freedom to Fix,” directs U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Lee Zeldin to reduce reliance on the California Air Resource Board (CARB) emission certification process for aftermarket vehicle products and ensure every American has the freedom to fix their vehicle. EPA took action by recognizing the Specialty Equipment Market Association (SEMA) as an alternative certification authority for aftermarket vehicle parts. Moving forward, Americans will be able to use SEMA’s Certified Emissions (SC-E) Program to show compliance with the Clean Air Act (CAA) and verify that approved aftermarket parts do not negatively impact vehicle emissions.

[Read more about the “Freedom to Fix” Memo.](#)

Trump EPA Unveils Proposal to Save Truckers \$12 Billion by Revising Unworkable Biden-Era DEF Deratements Rule

On July 9, 2026, EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin announced a proposal estimated to save American truckers \$12 billion through commonsense revisions to unnecessary and unworkable Biden-era compliance requirements. The reimagined approach also heeds calls from American truckers and diesel operators to eliminate deratements entirely, a burdensome problem often caused by Diesel Exhaust Fluid (DEF) system failures. If finalized, the savings could reach up to \$6,000 per vehicle on new truck purchases, on top of the increased productivity operators are currently losing when deratements cause sudden speed loss on the road. Collectively, these savings will be passed on to American families through lower costs for food, household goods, and other products trucks deliver, while still maintaining strong environmental protections and ensuring clean air.

Comments must be received on or before August 29, 2026.

[Read more about DEF proposed rulemaking](#) and [leave a comment on Regulation.gov](#).

EPA Proposes to Streamline State and Local Permitting Process for Minor Sources

On July 1, 2026, EPA proposed a rule to streamline the New Source Review (NSR) permitting process for minor sources by eliminating the minimum federal regulatory requirements for public participation. Under the proposal, decisions about public

participation requirements for State and local minor NSR programs would be turned over to the respective State and local air agencies, aligning EPA's regulations with the best reading of the Clean Air Act.

[Read more on the NSR permitting proposal.](#)

EPA Issues Permitting Guidance on Obtaining Emission Reduction Credits

On July 1, 2026, EPA issued guidance clarifying how permitting authorities may apply emission reduction credit (ERC) requirements under the Nonattainment New Source Review (NNSR) preconstruction permitting program. Currently, air permitting agencies require companies to obtain ERCs before issuing a permit authorizing construction, even if a facility will not begin operation for several years. Historically, uncertainty regarding the timing of offset credit acquisition has delayed permitting.

EPA's guidance clarifies that permitting authorities may issue NNSR permits before the required ERCs have been secured, provided certain enforceable conditions are met. This approach provides greater regulatory certainty for American businesses while giving states additional flexibility to issue permits for projects that are ready to move forward with construction.

[Read more about Permitting Guidance on Obtaining Emission Reduction Credits.](#)



KEY DATES & OPPORTUNITIES

SBEAP Annual Training Conference, September 15-17, 2026

Connect, collaborate, and strengthen your environmental impact at the upcoming in-person training and networking event specifically for Small Business Environmental Assistance Program (SBEAP) professionals. This is a prime opportunity to share best practices, discuss emerging challenges, and enhance your program's effectiveness. Join us for three days of targeted training sessions and invaluable peer-to-peer discussions in downtown Denver on September 15–17, 2026. The training sessions will be followed by the Colorado Green Business Network Recognition Event on September 18, 2026. For questions, please contact Gabe Catenacci at gabe.catenacci@state.co.us or 720-908-5481. [Register for the SBEAP Annual Training today.](#)

Compliance Date Extensions: Perchloroethylene (PCE) and Carbon Tetrachloride (CTC)

EPA finalized an extension of certain compliance dates applicable to certain entities subject to the risk-management rules for perchloroethylene (PCE) and carbon tetrachloride (CTC) under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA). For both PCE

and CTC, this action extends the compliance date for initial monitoring for inhalation exposure to **June 21, 2027**, and extends the compliance date to meet the existing chemical exposure limit, establish a regulated area, institute a workplace information and training program, provide any required respiratory personal protective equipment (PPE), and establish a respiratory PPE program to **September 20, 2027**.

Effective Date: July 28, 2026.

[Read more about the final rule and deadline extensions in the Federal Register.](#)

Establishing Pesticide Tolerances – Opportunity for Comment

EPA has finalized and established tolerances for residues of the following 5 pesticides, effective June 30, 2026:

1. Bifenthrin

[Read more about the final Bifenthrin rule and make a public comment in the Federal Register.](#)

2. Chlormequat Chloride

[Read more about the final chlormequat chloride rule and make a public comment in the Federal Register.](#)

3. Diflufenican

[Read more about the final diflufenican rule and make a public comment in the Federal Register.](#)

4. Epyrifenacil

[Read more about the final epyrifenacil rule and make a public comment in the Federal Register.](#)

5. Fluoxapiprolin

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

Objections and requests for hearings must be received on or before August 31, 2026, for all the above established tolerances.



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 SmallBiz@EPA to help promote cooperative federalism

and the essential compliance assistance services SBEAPs provide around the country to the local small business community.

Minnesota SBEAP in Action

The [Minnesota Small Business Environmental Assistance Program \(SBEAP\)](#), housed at the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), provides free and confidential regulatory compliance assistance to help small businesses understand and meet environmental requirements. The Program helps Minnesota businesses comply with environmental rules and reduce wastes, emissions, and regulatory obligations. It serves small businesses statewide, acting as a trusted first stop for businesses that have limited in-house environmental expertise.

Minnesota SBEAP services include helping businesses identify what environmental regulations and permits may apply to their business. MPCA experts can assist with air permitting, emission calculations, recordkeeping, and reporting requirements. They also can provide guidance on hazardous waste generator requirements and licensing, stormwater and wastewater basics, as well as proper management of universal and special wastes. The Program offers plain-language online tools and printed materials; one-on-one help by phone, email, in-person or via a virtual site visit. [Industry specific materials are available](#) for common small business sectors, such as auto body and paint shops, metal finishers, dry cleaners, woodworking operations, and aggregate processors.

Beyond compliance, Minnesota SBEAP helps businesses proactively prevent pollution and improve efficiency. Advisors connect businesses to [additional support programs](#) – such as the Minnesota Technical Assistance Program (MnTAP) or Retiree Environmental Technical Assistance Program (RETAP). These no-cost programs provide facility assessments and identify best management practices focused on reducing waste, water use, energy consumption, and operating costs. The Program offers loans of up to \$75,000 at zero-percent interest to small businesses for capital equipment purchases that help the company meet or exceed environmental regulations, or to investigate and clean up contaminated sites. Together these services help Minnesota small businesses stay compliant, reduce risk, and strengthen their environmental performance.

For more information, visit the [Minnesota SBEAP webpage](#) or contact the Program helpline at 651-282-6143, or 800-657-3938, or by email at smallbizhelp.pca@state.mn.us.

Minnesota's Small Business Ombudsman works closely with the states' SBEAP. The Ombudsman acts as an advocate for small businesses in Minnesota, mediating disputes between small businesses and MPCA and representing small business interests in rulemaking. Newly appointed MN Small Business Ombudsman, Derek Bozzell, now also serves as the National SBEAP Vice Chair. To contact and work with Derek directly, call 651-757-2121 or email him at Derek.Bozzell@state.mn.us.



SPOTLIGHT

EPA Announces \$3.6 Million in Funding for Small Businesses Developing Innovative Environmental Technologies

On July 8, 2026, EPA announced \$3.6 million in funding to nine U.S. small businesses to further develop and commercialize environmental technologies through EPA's Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program. EPA is one of 11 federal agencies participating in the SBIR program, a competitive, award-based initiative that helps small businesses explore technological solutions with the goal of bringing successful innovations to market.

[Read more about the funding awards and the SBIR Program.](#)

EPA Announces \$800,000 for Small Businesses Developing Environmental Technologies in Colorado, Wyoming

On July 14, 2026, EPA announced \$800,000 in funding to two recipients to develop and commercialize environmental technologies through EPA's SBIR program. EPA is one of 11 federal agencies participating in the SBIR program, which is a competitive, award-based initiative that helps small businesses explore technological solutions with the goal of bringing successful innovations to market. These awards will support solutions to complex environmental challenges, including monitoring water quality, addressing PFAS contamination, reducing indoor air toxins and pathogens, enhancing recycling systems, and developing safer chemicals.

[Read more about this Small Business Innovation Research Program.](#)

EPA Releases Tools to Assist Air Agencies in Exceptional Events Demonstrations

On June 26, 2026, EPA released three enhanced, user-friendly tools to help state, local, and Tribal air agencies expedite, develop, and prepare demonstrations of exceptional events. In response to requests from local, state, and Tribal air agencies, EPA has:

1. Updated the [Expedited Modeling of Burn Events Results \(EMBER\) Tool](#) to expand support for ozone demonstrations resulting from exceptional events.
2. Created a new tool called the [HYSPLIT Trajectory Tool for Exceptional Events](#) to provide users with quick access to trajectories, smoke plumes, and fire locations.
3. Launched a new historic version of the [AirNow Fire and Smoke Map](#) to provide past map conditions by date and time.

[Read more about the new air monitoring tools in the press release.](#)



ASBESTOS UPDATES

In one comprehensive program, the Asbestos and Small Business Ombuds (ASBO) serves two distinct roles: (1) the Asbestos Ombuds (AO) role and (2) the Small Business Ombuds role. EPA's Asbestos Ombudsman role is a requirement defined under the [Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act](#). In response to the AO role, each month the bulletin will also include asbestos-related information, resources and regulatory updates when available.

How to Become a Trained and Accredited Asbestos Professional

Training for asbestos professionals is required under the [EPA Asbestos Model Accreditation Plan \(MAP\)](#) issued under the [Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act of 1986 \(AHERA\)](#). The MAP requires the use of trained and accredited asbestos professionals when conducting asbestos inspections, designing, or conducting response actions at schools and public or commercial buildings. It provides guidance to states on the minimum training requirements for accrediting asbestos professionals. State training programs must be at least as stringent as the federal MAP. The MAP established five required training disciplines:

- Worker;
- Contractor/supervisor;
- Inspector;
- Management planner; and,
- Project designer.

In addition, one training discipline (project monitor) is recommended.

[The Asbestos School Hazard Abatement Reauthorization Act of 1990 \(ASHARA\)](#) amended AHERA to increase the amount of training hours required in the MAP course disciplines.

In addition to this initial training, asbestos professionals must take annual refresher training. EPA determined that online training can satisfy this requirement in lieu of in-person training. [The accrediting states must approve the online courses](#).

Where to Find Training

If you would like to become an asbestos professional, you can find approved training providers and courses by [contacting the appropriate state agency in the state](#) you want to work.

If your state does not offer this training, you will need to complete an EPA-approved training course, or a training course approved by another state that has an EPA-approved MAP program.

[Learn more about how to become a trained asbestos professional](#).

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ASBO Hotline: 800-368-5888

Website: [Asbestos and Small Business Ombudsman website](#)

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