

Conservation Committee Report

Volume 26 Issue 4

Jack Walters—Conservation Chairman

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The Conservation Pledge

I give my pledge as an

American to save and faithfully defend from waste, the natural resources of my country; the soil, the water, the air, the minerals, the plant life and the wildlife.

This is my Pledge!

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Biden-Harris Administration Finalizes First-Ever National Drinking Water Standard to Protect 100M People from PFAS Pollution

As part of the Administration's commitment to combating PFAS pollution, EPA announces \$1B investment through President Biden's Investing in America agenda to address PFAS in drinking water

The Biden-Harris Administration issued the first-ever national, legally enforceable drinking water standard to protect communities from exposure to harmful per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), also known as 'forever chemicals.' Exposure to PFAS has been

linked to deadly cancers, impacts to the liver and heart, and immune and developmental damage to infants and children. This final rule represents the most significant step to protect public health under [EPA's PFAS Strategic Roadmap](#).

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EPA, Congresswoman Summer Lee Kick Off Earth Month with Pittsburgh 'EcoStewards'

(EPA Regional Administrator Adam Ortiz and Congresswoman Summer Lee (PA-12) visited the Environmental Charter School (ECS) Intermediate School to kick off Earth

Month with staff and students. As part of the school visit, Ortiz and Lee met with 'EcoStewards'- 4th and 5th grade environmental leaders - to discuss litter, invasive species, and watershed protection. The group also potted native species that will soon be planted in Frick

Park.

Following the discussion and planting, the school's Green Team-preented their zero waste presentation to Ortiz and Lee, highlighting why

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Biden-Harris Administration Finalizes First-Ever National Drinking Water Standard to Protect 100M People from PFAS Pollution (continued)

The final rule will reduce PFAS exposure for approximately 100 million people, prevent thousands of deaths, and reduce tens of thousands of serious illnesses. Today's announcement complements [President Biden's government-wide action plan](#) to combat PFAS pollution.

Through President Biden's Investing in America agenda, EPA is also making unprecedented funding available to help ensure that all people have clean and safe water. In addition to today's final rule, EPA is announcing nearly [\\$1 billion in newly available funding](#) through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to help states and territories implement PFAS testing and treatment at public water systems and to help owners of private wells address PFAS contamination. This is part of a \$9 billion investment through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to help communities with drinking water impacted by PFAS and other emerging contaminants – the largest-ever investment in tackling PFAS pollution. An additional \$12 billion is available through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law for general drinking water improvements, including addressing emerging contaminants like PFAS.

EPA Administrator Michael Regan will join White House Council on Environmental Quality Chair Brenda Mallory to announce the final standard today at an event in Fayetteville, North Carolina. In 2017, area residents learned that the Cape Fear River, the drinking water source for 1 million people in the region, had been heavily contaminated with PFAS pollution from a nearby manufacturing facility. Today's announcements will help protect communities like Fayetteville from further devastating impacts of PFAS.

"Drinking water contaminated with PFAS has plagued communities across this country for too long," **said EPA Administrator Michael S. Regan.** "That is why President Biden has made tackling PFAS a top priority, investing historic resources to address these harmful chemicals and protect communities nationwide. Our PFAS Strategic Roadmap marshals the full breadth of EPA's authority and resources to protect people from these harmful forever chemicals. Today, I am proud to finalize this critical piece of our Roadmap, and in doing so, save thousands of lives and help ensure our children grow up healthier."

"President Biden believes that everyone deserves access to clean, safe drinking water, and he is delivering on that promise," **said Brenda Mallory, Chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality.** "The first national drinking water standards for PFAS marks a significant step towards delivering on the Biden-Harris Administration's commitment to advancing environmental justice, protecting communities, and securing clean water for people across the country."

"Under President Biden's leadership, we are taking a whole-of-government approach to tackle PFAS pollution and ensure that all Americans have access to clean, safe drinking water."

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Biden-Harris Administration Finalizes First-Ever National Drinking Water Standard to Protect 100M People from PFAS Pollution (continued)

Today's announcement by EPA complements these efforts and will help keep our communities safe from these toxic 'forever chemicals,'" **said Deputy Assistant to the President for the Cancer Moonshot, Dr. Danielle Carnival.** "Coupled with the additional \$1 billion investment from President Biden's Investing in America agenda to help communities address PFAS pollution, the reductions in exposure to toxic substances delivered by EPA's standards will further the Biden Cancer Moonshot goal of reducing the cancer death rate by at least half by 2047 and preventing more than four million cancer deaths — and stopping cancer before it starts by protecting communities from known risks associated with exposure to PFAS and other contaminants, including kidney and testicular cancers, and more."

EPA is taking a signature step to protect public health by establishing legally enforceable levels for several PFAS known to occur individually and as mixtures in drinking water. This rule sets limits for five individual PFAS: PFOA, PFOS, PFNA, PFHxS, and HFPO-DA (also known as "GenX Chemicals"). The rule also sets a limit for mixtures of any two or more of four PFAS: PFNA, PFHxS, PFBS, and "GenX chemicals." By reducing exposure to PFAS, this final rule will prevent thousands of premature deaths, tens of thousands of serious illnesses, including certain cancers and liver and heart impacts in adults, and immune and developmental impacts to infants and children.

This final rule advances President Biden's commitment to ending cancer as we know it as part of the Biden Cancer Moonshot, to ensuring that all Americans have access to clean, safe, drinking water, and to furthering the Biden-Harris Administration's commitment to environmental justice by protecting communities that are most exposed to toxic chemicals.

EPA estimates that between about 6% and 10% of the 66,000 public drinking water systems subject to this rule may have to take action to reduce PFAS to meet these new standards. All public water systems have three years to complete their initial monitoring for these chemicals. They must inform the public of the level of PFAS measured in their drinking water. Where PFAS is found at levels that exceed these standards, systems must implement solutions to reduce PFAS in their drinking water within five years.

The new limits in this rule are achievable using a range of available technologies and approaches including granular activated carbon, reverse osmosis, and ion exchange systems. For example, the Cape Fear Public Utility Authority, serving Wilmington, NC – one of the communities most heavily impacted by PFAS contamination – has effectively deployed a granular activated carbon system to remove PFAS regulated by this rule. Drinking water systems will have flexibility to determine the best solution for their community.

EPA will be working closely with state co-regulators in supporting water systems and local officials to implement this rule. In the coming weeks, EPA will host a series of webinars to

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Biden-Harris Administration Finalizes First-Ever National Drinking Water Standard to Protect 100M People from PFAS Pollution (continued)

provide information to the public, communities, and water utilities about the final PFAS drinking water regulation. To learn more about the webinars, please visit [EPA's PFAS drinking water regulation webpage](#). EPA has also published a [toolkit of communications resources](#) to help drinking water systems and community leaders educate the public about PFAS, where they come from, their health risks, how to reduce exposure, and about this rule.

"We are thankful that Administrator Regan and the Biden Administration are taking this action to protect drinking water in North Carolina and across the country," **said North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper**. "We asked for this because we know science-based standards for PFAS and other compounds are desperately needed."

"For decades, the American people have been exposed to the family of incredibly toxic 'forever chemicals' known as PFAS with no protection from their government. Those chemicals now contaminate virtually all Americans from birth. That's because for generations, PFAS chemicals slid off of every federal environmental law like a fried egg off a Teflon pan — until Joe Biden came along," **said Environmental Working Group President and Co-Founder Ken Cook**. "We commend EPA Administrator Michael Regan for his tireless leadership to make this decision a reality, and CEQ Chair Brenda Mallory for making sure PFAS is tackled with the 'whole of government' approach President Biden promised. There is much work yet to be done to end PFAS pollution. The fact that the EPA has adopted the very strong policy announced today should give everyone confidence that the Biden administration will stay the course and keep the president's promises, until the American people are protected, at long last, from the scourge of PFAS pollution."

"We learned about GenX and other PFAS in our tap water six years ago. I raised my children on this water and watched loved ones suffer from rare or recurrent cancers. No one should ever worry if their tap water will make them sick or give them cancer. I'm grateful the Biden EPA heard our pleas and kept its promise to the American people. We will keep fighting until all exposures to PFAS end and the chemical companies responsible for business-related human rights abuses are held fully accountable," **said Emily Donovan, co-founder of Clean Cape Fear**.

More details about funding to address PFAS in Drinking Water

Through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, EPA is making an unprecedented \$21 billion available to strengthen our nation's drinking water systems, including by addressing PFAS contamination. Of that, \$9 billion is specifically for tackling PFAS and emerging contaminants. The financing programs delivering this funding are part of President Biden's [Justice40 Initiative](#), which set the goal that 40% of the overall benefits of certain federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities that have been historically marginalized by underinvestment and overburdened by pollution.

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Biden-Harris Administration Finalizes First-Ever National Drinking Water Standard to Protect 100M People from PFAS Pollution (continued)

Additionally, EPA has a nationwide Water Technical Assistance program to help small, rural, and disadvantaged communities access federal resources by working directly with water systems to identify challenges like PFAS; develop plans; build technical, managerial, and financial capacity; and apply for water infrastructure funding. Learn more about [EPA's Water Technical Assistance programs](#).

More details about the final PFAS drinking water standards:

- For PFOA and PFOS, EPA is setting a Maximum Contaminant Level Goal, a non-enforceable health-based goal, at zero. This reflects the latest science showing that there is no level of exposure to these contaminants without risk of health impacts, including certain cancers.
- EPA is setting enforceable Maximum Contaminant Levels at 4.0 parts per trillion for PFOA and PFOS, individually. This standard will reduce exposure from these PFAS in our drinking water to the lowest levels that are feasible for effective implementation.
- For PFNA, PFHxS, and “GenX Chemicals,” EPA is setting the MCLGs and MCLs at 10 parts per trillion.
- Because PFAS can often be found together in mixtures, and research shows these mixtures may have combined health impacts, EPA is also setting a limit for any mixture of two or more of the following PFAS: PFNA, PFHxS, PFBS, and “GenX Chemicals.”

EPA is issuing this rule after reviewing extensive research and science on how PFAS affects public health, while engaging with the water sector and with state regulators to ensure effective implementation. EPA also considered 120,000 comments on the proposed rule from a wide variety of stakeholders.

Background:

PFAS, also known as ‘forever chemicals,’ are prevalent in the environment. PFAS are a category of chemicals used since the 1940s to repel oil and water and resist heat, which makes them useful in everyday products such as nonstick cookware, stain resistant clothing, and fire-fighting foam. The science is clear that exposure to certain PFAS over a long period of time can cause cancer and other illnesses. In addition, PFAS exposure during critical life stages such as pregnancy or early childhood can also result in adverse health impacts.

Across the country, PFAS contamination is impacting millions of people’s health and wellbeing. People can be exposed to PFAS through drinking water or food contaminated with PFAS, by coming into contact with products that contain PFAS, or through workplace exposures in certain industries.

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Biden-Harris Administration Finalizes First-Ever National Drinking Water Standard to Protect 100M People from PFAS Pollution (continued)

Since EPA Administrator Michael S. Regan announced the [PFAS Strategic Roadmap](#) in October 2021, EPA has taken action – within the Biden-Harris Administration’s whole-of-government approach – by advancing science and following the law to safeguard public health, protect the environment, and hold polluters accountable. The actions described in the PFAS Strategic Roadmap each represent important and meaningful steps to protect communities from PFAS contamination. Cumulatively, these actions will build upon one another and lead to more enduring and protective solutions. In December 2023, the EPA released its [second annual report on PFAS progress](#). The report highlights significant accomplishments achieved under the EPA’s PFAS Strategic Roadmap.

For further information: EPA Press Office (press@epa.gov)

Source: U.S. EPA

EPA, Congresswoman Summer Lee Kick Off Earth Month with Pittsburgh 'EcoStewards' (continued)

every small action makes a difference.

"The environmental literacy of these young students is truly remarkable," reflected EPA Mid-Atlantic Regional Administrator Adam Ortiz. "To have such a deep understanding of complicated issues such as stormwater at such a young age is a testament to the value environmental education programs have, not only on the students, but the surrounding communities as well."

"It was an immense privilege to join EPA Mid-Atlantic Regional Administrator for presentations from 'EcoSteward' 4th and 5th graders at one of our schools" said Rep. Summer Lee (PA-12). "The depth of knowledge and passion of our youngest Pennsylvanians to protect our environment and ensure clean air and water for all continue to inspire me--and have renewed my efforts to continue fighting for environmental justice, climate action, and the education of our children on these critical issues."

"We are grateful that EPA Mid-Atlantic Regional Administrator Adam Ortiz and Congresswoman Lee kicked off our Earth Month celebrations with us," said Environmental Charter School Superintendent Dr. Amanda Cribbs, EdD. "ECS focuses on real-world education, and this was the perfect opportunity for students to see how what they learn today can translate to an environmentally friendly and sustainable career in the future."

Originally celebrated on April 22, 1970, Earth Day is now often recognized during the entire month of April as a way to raise awareness about environmental issues we're facing across the globe. To learn more about the history of the celebration and ideas on how to make every day Earth Day, visit: <https://www.epa.gov/earthday>

Source: U.S. EPA

DEP Holds Keystone Sanitary Landfill Accountable for Odor Concerns, Reaches Settlement on Civil Penalty & Requires Keystone to Immediately Begin Mitigating Odor

DEP and the boroughs of Dunmore and Throop will split a \$575,000 civil penalty, this is the largest fine issued to Keystone Sanitary Landfill

DEP will continue monitoring and responding to complaints to ensure Keystone complies with the agreement and reduces odors at the landfill

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has entered a Consent Order and Agreement (COA) with Keystone Sanitary Landfill for odor violations, including creating malodors, at its facility in the boroughs of Dunmore and Throop between November 2022 and February 2024, and impacting residents in several surrounding communities. The \$575,000 civil penalty is the largest penalty DEP has issued to Keystone Sanitary Landfill in the last decade.

Under the agreement, DEP has ordered Keystone to take corrective action to mitigate the potential for off-site odors from its leachate lagoons. Some of those measures include utilizing foam, implementing a new intermediate cover system, and submitting to the department a permit modification for the installation of two 2,500,000-gallon leachate storage tank systems. DEP has also directed the landfill to re-evaluate the effectiveness of its Reverse Osmosis (RO) system for treating leachate and make any necessary modifications. Under the agreement, Keystone is also required to mitigate landfill gas odors from the site. Keystone must implement additional surface monitoring and follow an accelerated capping schedule of at least 30 acres to minimize areas of intermediate cover.

A \$575,000 civil penalty will be split between DEP and the boroughs of Dunmore and Throop. DEP will receive \$180,000 from the COA, plus \$35,000 for cost recovery. The \$180,000 will be deposited into the Solid Waste Abatement Fund, which is a statewide fund set up to eliminate potential hazards related to solid waste. DEP also worked to ensure that the boroughs of Dunmore and Throop will each receive \$180,000, which Keystone Landfill is required to deposit into a separate bank account for both parties. This money will be used to fund projects which substantially improve, protect, restore, or remediate the environment, or improve, protect, or reduce risks to the public health or safety. Keystone must make those deposits within 30 days.

“The Department of Environmental Protection made a commitment to residents to respond swiftly to address these odors and hold the responsible party accountable,” said **DEP Interim Acting Secretary Jessica Shirley**. “That’s why DEP worked around the clock to investigate the odors and ordered Keystone Landfill to take corrective steps so a situation like this does not happen in the future. The Shapiro Administration will continue to protect every Pennsylvanian’s constitutional right to clean air, pure water, and a healthy environment.”

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DEP Holds Keystone Sanitary Landfill Accountable for Odor Concerns, Reaches Settlement on Civil Penalty & Requires Keystone to Immediately Begin Mitigating Odor
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“The Department thanks impacted Pennsylvanians for working with DEP staff over the past few months,” said **DEP Northeast Regional Director Joseph J. Buczynski, PE**. “The complaints we received were instrumental in helping to confirm the source of the odors and hold the landfill accountable.”

Following an increase of complaints about off-site odors from the Keystone Sanitary Landfill, DEP staff worked around the clock to actively address hundreds of odor complaints and conducted odor patrols on weekdays, early mornings, evenings, and weekends. During complaint investigations and regular and after-hours odor patrols, from November 2022 through February 2024, there were at least 70 occasions where representatives of the Department detected landfill gas and/or leachate odors offsite and were able to attribute them to Keystone. During complaint investigations, staff also determined that Keystone had created odors, including strong malodors, from its facility, impacting the community. A malodor is defined by DEP regulation as: *“[A]n odor which causes annoyance or discomfort to the public and which the Department determines to be objectionable to the public.”*

As part of its investigation into the odors, the Department determined that Keystone:

- Failed to implement its Nuisance Minimization and Control Plan to minimize and control other conditions that are harmful to the environment or public health, or which create safety hazards, odors, dust, noise, unsightliness, and other public nuisances.
- Permitted the emission of a malodorous air contaminant from the facility into the atmosphere in such a manner that the malodors were detectable outside the facility where the malodors were generated.
- Failed to prevent and control air pollution.
- Failed to implement the gas control and monitoring plan.
- Failed to maintain a uniform intermediate cover that prevents odors.

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DEP Holds Keystone Sanitary Landfill Accountable for Odor Concerns, Reaches Settlement on Civil Penalty & Requires Keystone to Immediately Begin Mitigating Odor
(continued)

- Failed to properly conduct enhanced surface monitoring on intermediate slopes.

The failures described above are a violation of the Solid Waste Management Act, the Air Pollution Control Act, DEP's regulations, and conditions in the landfill's existing permits it has with the Department.

DEP will continue to monitor the landfill and to investigate complaints to ensure Keystone Sanitary Landfill is reducing odors, as is required by the COA. If Keystone Sanitary Landfill fails to comply with the terms of the COA, they could face further penalties.

A copy of the COA with Keystone can be found on the [DEP website](#).

For more information on the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, [please visit website](#).

Source: The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

EPA Launches New Website to Improve Transparency in Permitting

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is announcing the launch of a new website, epa.gov/permits, a centralized web-based platform for information about federal environmental permitting. It highlights EPA's permitting and environmental review programs and shares information on related statutes and environmental justice initiatives. In support of EPA's commitments under Title 41 of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST-41), it also displays the status of EPA permits for large scale infrastructure projects covered by this statute. The website is a resource for the public, permit applicants and federal agency partners.

"EPA's new website is making it easier for the public and stakeholders to learn about the agency's permitting process and our programs," **said EPA Deputy Administrator Janet McCabe.** "This new, comprehensive website provides a one-stop portal for the public, permit applicants and colleagues from other federal, state and local agencies to quickly find information about EPA's permitting program and how these permits are helping to protect public health and the environment in communities across our nation."

"EPA has been working diligently to increase the transparency of information regarding our permitting resources, requirements and timelines, especially as we implement President Biden's ambitious Investing in America Agenda. We are pleased to launch this site available to all," **said Vicki Arroyo, Associate Administrator for EPA's Office of Policy,** which oversees permitting and environmental review work for EPA.

The new website provides:

- Centralized information about all EPA permitting programs, information on delegations of authority to states and descriptions of other requirements that are often applicable (such as Endangered Species Act and National Historic Preservation Act consultation).
- Public-facing reports and resources, including environmental justice and civil rights in permitting information.
- FAST-41 information, including an explanation of EPA's roles under the Act and a table that shows the status of EPA permits needed for FAST-41 projects and project tracking.
- Inflation Reduction Act information regarding funding allocated to EPA for improving efficiencies in permitting.

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EPA Launches New Website to Improve Transparency in Permitting (continued)

Background

In May 2022, the Biden-Harris Permitting Action Plan directed all federal agencies to evaluate their permitting processes and create goals around project tracking and dissemination of public information. This website fulfills EPA's commitments under the Permitting Action Plan by providing the status of FAST-41 projects with EPA permits and posting them on a public-facing website.

FAST-41 requires EPA to post details on its website relevant to the permitting process, such as permit applications and public meetings, at appropriate intervals. FAST-41 is aimed at improving the timelines, predictability and transparency of federal environmental review and authorization processes for covered infrastructure projects. EPA is a member of the Federal Permitting Improvement Steering Council (Permitting Council), represented by EPA Deputy Administrator Janet McCabe and Deputy Associate Administrator in EPA's Office of Policy, Navis Bermudez. EPA has a permitting role on some FAST-41 covered projects, such as offshore wind energy under the renewable energy production sector.

For further information: EPA Press Office (press@epa.gov)

Source: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

DEP Issues \$1.1 Million Civil Penalty to Equitrans for Violations Related to Rager Mountain Gas Release

The penalty includes \$764,000 pursuant to Pennsylvania's oil and gas and solid waste laws and \$350,000 for air quality violations – the maximum civil penalty allowable under the Pennsylvania Air Pollution Control Act

DEP will continue to oversee cleanup and remediation activities to safeguard Pennsylvanians' air and water

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has assessed significant civil penalties totaling \$1,114,000 from Equitrans, L.P. (Equitrans) for air quality, waste, and oil and gas violations related to the uncontrolled gas release from Equitrans' Rager Mountain natural gas storage field and George L Reade 1 storage well in November 2022.

"Since November 2022, DEP has been working around the clock to keep Pennsylvanians safe and hold Equitrans accountable for the uncontrolled release of natural gas at Rager Mountain. DEP responded immediately to this incident, from oil and gas staff and emergency responders to air quality inspectors and geologists reviewing cleanup and remediation plans," said **DEP Interim Acting Secretary Jessica Shirley**. "The Department is committed to holding operators accountable, and we will continue monitoring the environmental impacts of this incident to ensure Pennsylvanians' health and safety."

The total civil penalty assessments include \$350,000 for air quality violations, which is the maximum civil penalty assessment allowable under the Pennsylvania Air Pollution Control Act, and \$764,000 pursuant to Pennsylvania's oil and gas and solid waste laws.

From November 6, 2022 until November 19, 2022, natural gas vented uncontrollably from the Rager Mountain storage field in Jackson Township, Cambria County. DEP responded immediately to the well control emergency, maintained a 24/7 onsite presence for 15 days, and continued to expend significant resources to investigate and oversee remedial activities at the site throughout 2023.

Attempts to control the well involved pumping fresh water and a heavy brine into the well to stop the flow of gas. Approximately 50-100 barrels of heavy brine were released onto the ground and into conveyance channels and wetlands near the site, violating the Solid Waste Management Act. The well was brought under control on November 19, and a cement plug was installed on November 20, 2022.

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DEP Issues \$1.1 Million Civil Penalty to Equitrans for Violations Related to Rager Mountain Gas Release (continued)

DEP issued two compliance orders requiring corrective actions which Equitrans appealed. Equitrans however has complied with both orders and has agreed to withdraw its appeals. DEP continues to monitor the environmental impacts of the incident.

Accounts from DEP personnel and members of the public described the odors and noise produced by the venting of natural gas as akin to a jet engine. The leak created a visible plume of gas that led DEP to recommend, and the Federal Aviation Administration to issue, a temporary flight restriction over the area during much of the incident.

Equitrans provided emission estimates that indicated approximately 1.037 billion cubic feet of natural gas was released into the atmosphere, violating Pennsylvania's Air Pollution Control Act. Approximately 223 tons of carbon dioxide and 27,040 tons of methane were released, which represents approximately 10 percent of the total recorded methane emissions in Pennsylvania in 2022, based on DEP's inventory of self-reported emissions data. The impact of methane is over 25 times greater than carbon dioxide at trapping heat in the atmosphere.

The 106 tons of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) emitted represent the highest recorded VOC emissions from any facility in the oil and gas sector in Pennsylvania in 2022, based on DEP's inventory of self-reported emissions data. VOCs are a precursor to ozone, which is known to cause adverse health effects.

Gas storage fields are regulated at the federal level by the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration and Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. DEP continues to collaborate with federal and state regulators on their respective investigations and areas of oversight.

More information can be found in the [Consent Assessment of Civil Penalty](#) for the air quality violations and the [Civil Penalty Assessment](#) for the waste and oil and gas violations.

For more information on the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, [please visit website](#),

Source: The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

EPA Recognizes Excellence and Innovation in Clean Water and Drinking Water Infrastructure Projects

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recognized 32 clean water and drinking water infrastructure projects for excellence and innovation. These projects were funded in part by the Clean Water State Revolving Fund and Drinking Water State Revolving Fund programs. EPA's AQUARIUS and PISCES national recognition programs highlight exemplary water infrastructure projects. They showcase improvements in water quality and public health protection as a result of strong partnership at the federal, state, and local level. With funding from the historic Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, more projects like these will be possible in the future.

"Communities across the country are tackling water infrastructure challenges ranging from removing lead pipes to improving infrastructure resilience to climate change to addressing emerging contaminants. I am thrilled to recognize innovative infrastructure projects that are delivering cleaner, safer water for communities while providing insights that can be replicated across the country," **said EPA Acting Assistant Administrator for Water Bruno Pigott**. "I look forward to seeing more projects break ground as we continue to invest \$50 billion through President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law."

EPA's AQUARIUS program celebrates Drinking Water State Revolving Fund projects that are innovative, sustainable, and protect public health. Twelve projects by state or local governments and drinking water utilities were recognized by the 2023 AQUARIUS program, including the following exceptional projects:

- Excellence in Innovative Financing: City of Harrington, Delaware – Water Main System Improvements.
- Excellence in System Partnerships: Duck Lake Water Association, Washington – Johnson Creek-Duck Lake Consolidation Project.
- Excellence in Community Engagement: White Mountain Apache Housing Authority, Arizona – Apache Pine Housing Project.
- Excellence in Public Health Protection: Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Authority, New Mexico – South Valley Drinking Water Project, Phases 7B, 7C, and 7D.
- Excellence in Climate Change Mitigation and Resiliency: City of Homer, Alaska – Seawall Armor Rock Project.
- Excellence in Creative Solutions: City of Benton Harbor, Michigan – City-Wide Lead Service Line Replacements.

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EPA Recognizes Excellence and Innovation in Clean Water and Drinking Water Infrastructure Projects (continued)

EPA's PISCES program celebrates innovative CWSRF programs implemented by assistance recipients. Twenty projects by state or local governments, public utilities, and private entities were recognized by the 2023 PISCES program, including the following exceptional projects:

- Excellence in Innovative Financing: Athens County, Ohio — Athens County Commissioners US 50 Sanitary Sewer Improvements Phase six and seven.
- Excellence in System Partnerships: Town of Carlisle, South Carolina — Carlisle/Union Regional Sewer Extension.
- Excellence in Community Engagement: City of Newark, Delaware — Rodney Dormitory Site Storm Water Management Park.
- Excellence in Environmental and Public Health Protection: City of Ripley Sanitary Board, West Virginia — Ripley Wastewater Treatment Plant.
- Excellence in Creative Solutions: Spokane Conservation District, Washington — Farmed Smart Certification & Direct Seed Loan Implementation Program.

See the full list of recognized projects and learn more about the [AQUARIUS](#) and [PISCES](#) Programs.

Background

The SRFs are an EPA-state partnerships that provide communities with a permanent, independent source of low-cost financing for a wide range of water quality and drinking water infrastructure projects. EPA's SRFs have provided more than \$229 billion in financial assistance to over 48,000 water quality infrastructure projects and over 19,000 drinking water projects across the country.

With the passing of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law in November 2021, over \$43 billion in funding will be provided to the SRFs over 5 years for communities' water infrastructure improvement projects. This historic funding will help address the most pressing water challenges of today, especially in disadvantaged communities, and make more water infrastructure projects possible.

For further information: EPA Press Office (press@epa.gov)

Source: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

EPA Releases Updated Interim Guidance on Destroying and Disposing of Certain PFAS and PFAS-Containing Materials

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency released an updated “[Interim Guidance on the Destruction and Disposal of Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances and Materials Containing Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances](#).” The updated guidance reflects the latest, best available science to provide information that managers of PFAS wastes can use to evaluate the most appropriate destruction, disposal, or storage method among those currently available. The guidance also recommends that decision-makers prioritize the use of technologies with the lowest potential for environmental release, to better protect people and communities from PFAS exposures.

The guidance contains a new technology evaluation framework that enables technology developers to assess emerging innovative destruction and disposal methods. The guidance also underscores the need to generate and publicly release data to validate whether existing and new technologies may be suitable for larger-scale use. It describes new EPA test methods and improved screening tools to identify and prioritize safeguards for communities located near destruction and disposal facilities and overburdened by pollution. The updated guidance can help government officials and private industry make informed decisions on PFAS destruction and disposal technologies, and aid in the implementation of forthcoming rules to protect public health from exposure to PFAS.

“This guidance is another important step in the agency’s efforts to protect communities from PFAS pollution,” **said Cliff Villa, Deputy Assistant Administrator for EPA’s Office of Land and Emergency Management.** “It is a testament to the Biden-Harris Administration’s unwavering commitment to advance scientific understanding on methods to remediate, dispose of, and destroy PFAS contamination.”

The updated interim guidance retains the 2020 guidance’s focus on three existing technologies: underground injection, landfills, and thermal treatment under certain conditions. It also incorporates public comments on EPA’s 2020 interim guidance, integrates years of government and private sector work developing and accessing technologies, and highlights innovation and emerging technologies that warrant further evaluation. The new document identifies key data gaps and uncertainties that [ongoing research](#) is working to address to achieve efficient destruction of PFAS and minimization of environmental PFAS release. The document calls for actively undertaking more of this important work, including EPA collaborations with the private sector, to inform data-driven decision making that protects public health and the environment.

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EPA Releases Updated Interim Guidance on Destroying and Disposing of Certain PFAS and PFAS-Containing Materials (continued)

This interim guidance is part of the [EPA's PFAS Strategic Roadmap](#), which describes the agency's commitment to the American people to confront PFAS contamination head on — by following the science, leveraging all available tools and authorities, holding polluters accountable, and investing historic resources to protect communities. For more info about EPA's work to address PFAS and to access PFAS informational tools, visit EPA's [Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances \(PFAS\) website](#).

EPA will accept comments on the interim guidance for 180 days following publication in the Federal Register to help inform a future update to this guidance. Comments can be submitted to the public docket at [Regulations.gov](#), Docket ID: EPA-HQ-OLEM-2020-0527.

For further information: EPA Press Office (press@epa.gov)

Source: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Biden-Harris Administration Announces \$20 Billion in Grants to Mobilize Private Capital and Deliver Clean Energy and Climate Solutions to Communities Across America

EPA announces eight selections under the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund's National Clean Investment Fund and Clean Communities Investment Accelerator through President Biden's Investing in America agenda

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced its selections for \$20 billion in grant awards under two competitions within the historic \$27 billion Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF), which was created under the Inflation Reduction Act as part of President Biden's Investing in America agenda. The three selections under the \$14 billion National Clean Investment Fund and five selections under the \$6 billion Clean Communities Investment Accelerator will create a national clean financing network for clean energy and climate solutions across sectors, ensuring communities have access to the capital they need to participate in and benefit from a cleaner, more sustainable economy. By financing tens of thousands of projects, this national clean financing network will mobilize private capital to reduce climate and air pollution while also reducing energy costs, improving public health, and creating good-paying clean energy jobs in communities across the country, especially in low-income and disadvantaged communities.

Vice President Kamala Harris and EPA Administrator Michael S. Regan will announce the selections under these two grant competitions in Charlotte, North Carolina. While in Charlotte, the Vice President and Administrator will meet with a homeowner in a historically Black community, where a local nonprofit, Self-Help, worked with community partners to finance, renovate, and construct energy-efficient, affordable homes for low- and moderate-income families. Thanks to that partnership, this first-time homeowner pays significantly lower energy bills and has a healthy and comfortable place to raise his family. The selections the Vice President is announcing will ensure more families can experience those same benefits. In fact, one of the selections being announced today will allow Self-Help and its partners as part of the Climate United Fund's application to deliver similar home efficiency projects to over 30,000 homes across the country.

Collectively, the selected applicants have committed to driving significant impact toward the program's objectives. They will reduce or avoid up to 40 million metric tons of climate pollution per year, making a significant contribution to the Biden-Harris Administration's climate goals. They will mobilize almost \$7 of private capital for every \$1 of federal funds, ensuring that each public dollar is leveraged for significant private-sector investment. And they will dedicate over \$14 billion of capital—over 70% of the selections for awards announced today—toward low-income and disadvantaged communities, making the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund the single largest non-tax investment within the Inflation Reduction Act to build a clean energy economy while benefiting communities historically left behind.

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Biden-Harris Administration Announces \$20 Billion in Grants to Mobilize Private Capital and Deliver Clean Energy and Climate Solutions to Communities Across America (continued)

To date, the eight selected applicants have supported thousands of individuals, businesses, and community organizations to access capital for climate and clean energy projects. With their awards, selectees will unleash tens of thousands of more projects like these across the country for decades to come:

1. When her water heater died, Mildred Carter in DeSoto, Georgia could not immediately afford to replace it. With the support of **Power Forward Communities** coalition member Rewiring America, Mildred was enrolled in a whole-town demonstration program that would combine Georgia Power incentives of up to \$5,000 with philanthropic support for energy efficiency upgrades in her home. Her brand-new heat pump water heater was installed on December 23, just in time for the holidays.
2. The National Trust Community Investment Corporation, **Appalachian Community Capital's** partner, recently led the charge on a \$5.7 million sustainable rehabilitation of the historic National Guard Armory building located in one of Owosso, Michigan's underserved communities. Alongside the Shiawassee Chamber of Commerce, the organization helped transform the space into an incubator for Owosso's small businesses and local nonprofits complete with high-efficiency, all-electric heating and ENERGY STAR certified appliances.
3. **Opportunity Finance Network** member Solar and Energy Loan Fund (SELF) operates in Florida, which has experienced some of the most disastrous effects of the climate crisis. SELF, a U.S.-Treasury certified Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI), recently partnered with Miami-Dade County's Office of Resilience to invest in solar power, window and roof upgrades, and aging-in-place upgrades—including the installation of solar panels and battery backup systems for Gibson Plaza, a 65-unit affordable senior housing project. These investments have helped the community reduce energy costs while also building resiliency, ensuring residents can stay in their homes and remain protected against future climate impacts.

"When President Biden and I made the largest investment in our nation's history to address the climate crisis and to build a clean energy economy, we made sure that every community would be able to participate and benefit," **said Vice President Kamala Harris.** "The grantees announced today will help ensure that families, small businesses, and community leaders have access to the capital they need to make climate and clean energy projects a reality in their neighborhoods."

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Biden-Harris Administration Announces \$20 Billion in Grants to Mobilize Private Capital and Deliver Clean Energy and Climate Solutions to Communities Across America (continued)

"President Biden and Vice President Harris have put communities at the center of their Investing in America agenda. Today, we're putting an unprecedented \$20 billion to work in communities that for too long have been shut out of resources to lower costs and benefit from clean technology solutions," **said EPA Administrator Michael S. Regan**. "The selectees announced today will deliver transformational investments for American communities, businesses, and families and unleash tens of thousands of clean technology projects like putting solar on small businesses, electrifying affordable housing, providing EV loans for young families, and countless others. That translates to good-paying jobs, energy bill savings, and cleaner air, all while delivering on President Biden's historic agenda to combat climate change."

"So many families face the same challenges: something breaks, you can't afford to replace it, and the short-term solution is really no solution at all," **said homeowner Mildred Carter of DeSoto, Georgia**. "I'm grateful for the help I got to install a brand-new heat pump water heater that provides me all the hot water I need while saving energy and money. And I'm grateful that there's now going to be more options for families that will make these new appliances affordable and bring the benefits to them too."

Together, the eight selected applicants have committed to delivering on the three objectives of the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund: reducing climate and air pollution; delivering benefits to communities, especially low-income and disadvantaged communities; and mobilizing financing and private capital. As part of this collective effort, selected applicants have committed to:

- Fund projects that will reduce or avoid greenhouse gas emissions by up to 40 million metric tons of CO₂ equivalent per year—equivalent to the emissions of nearly 9 million typical passenger vehicles—making a significant contribution to the President's climate goals of reducing emissions 50 to 52 percent below 2005 levels in 2030 and achieving net-zero emissions by no later than 2050.
- Dedicate over \$14 billion toward low-income and disadvantaged communities, including over \$4 billion for rural communities as well as almost \$1.5 billion for Tribal communities—ensuring that program benefits flow to the communities most in need and advance the President's [Justice40 Initiative](#).
- Achieve a private capital mobilization ratio of nearly 7 times, with every dollar in grant funds leveraged for almost seven dollars in private funds over the next seven years—turning \$20 billion of public funds into \$150 billion of public and private investment to maximize the impact of public funds.

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Biden-Harris Administration Announces \$20 Billion in Grants to Mobilize Private Capital and Deliver Clean Energy and Climate Solutions to Communities Across America (continued)

These commitments have been taken or derived from the application packages that selected applicants submitted to EPA and adjusted for the amount of funding received. Moving forward, EPA will work with selected applicants to revise their application packages into workplans that reflect formal commitments through the award agreements. [Read what the eight selected applicants have committed to deliver on in their application packages.](#)

“After more than a decade of hard work, our vision to create a national climate bank is a reality. Thanks to the \$20 billion we secured in the Inflation Reduction Act, the [Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund](#) will draw on the experience of public, semi-public, and non-profit community leaders to unleash tens of billions of dollars to deliver more than money, but also justice, to disadvantaged communities. As the single largest climate investment in the Inflation Reduction Act, the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund will cut emissions, protect health, and create job and economic opportunities so that communities won’t just survive but thrive for generations to come. Even more than money, the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund is delivering hope – hope for justice and for a livable future. I applaud the Environmental Protection Agency’s work to quickly stand up this critical program while ensuring transparency and collaboration,” **said U.S. Senator Edward J. Markey, Chair, Senate EPW Subcommittee on Clean Air, Climate, and Nuclear Safety, and co-author of the National Climate Bank Act.**

“Fifteen years ago, we laid out our vision for a national climate bank that would bolster our efforts to combat global warming by accelerating investment in clean energy. We turned that vision into reality by establishing the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund through the Inflation Reduction Act – and today’s deployment of \$20 billion from that Fund is a pivotal moment in America’s fight to confront the climate crisis while driving inclusive economic growth. These funds will serve as a catalyst for private investment in job-creating projects to cut carbon emissions, spur clean energy innovation, and advance environmental justice in underserved communities that have borne the brunt of climate change. Today’s investments are just the beginning – they will be multiplied seven times over to turbocharge our transition to a clean energy economy,” **said U.S. Senator Chris Van Hollen, who first introduced legislation to create a national green bank in 2009 when he was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives.**

“These awards are making clean energy financing accessible to low-income and underserved communities that have for far too long carried the brunt of environmental pollution, helping us attack the climate crisis head on and creating jobs while lowering energy costs. These investments will fund projects that otherwise would not have been possible, and will mobilize nearly seven times as much in private capital. I’m proud to have helped author and pass the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund and look forward to continuing to invest in the most impactful and urgent projects to reach our climate and environmental justice goals,” **said Congresswoman Debbie Dingell (MI-06).**

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Biden-Harris Administration Announces \$20 Billion in Grants to Mobilize Private Capital and Deliver Clean Energy and Climate Solutions to Communities Across America (continued)

Selected Applicant Information

The eight selected applicants across the National Clean Investment Fund and Clean Communities Investment Accelerator will create a first-of-its-kind national clean financing network that will finance climate and clean energy projects, especially in low-income and disadvantaged communities.

National Clean Investment Fund (NCIF) Selectees

Under the \$14 billion National Clean Investment Fund, the three selected applicants will establish national clean financing institutions that deliver accessible, affordable financing for clean technology projects nationwide, partnering with private-sector investors, developers, community organizations, and others to deploy projects, mobilize private capital at scale, and enable millions of Americans to benefit from the program through energy bill savings, cleaner air, job creation, and more. Additional details on each of the three selected applicants, including the narrative proposals that were submitted to EPA as part of the application process, can be found on EPA's [Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund NCIF website](#).

All three selected applicants surpassed the program requirement of dedicating a minimum of 40% of capital to low-income and disadvantaged communities. The three selected applicants are:

- **Climate United Fund (\$6.97 billion award)**, a nonprofit formed by Calvert Impact to partner with two U.S. Treasury-certified Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs), Self-Help Ventures Fund and Community Preservation Corporation. Together, these three nonprofit financial institutions bring a decades-long track record of successfully raising and deploying \$30 billion in capital with a focus on low-income and disadvantaged communities. Climate United Fund's program will focus on investing in harder-to-reach market segments like consumers, small businesses, small farms, community facilities, and schools—with at least 60% of its investments in low-income and disadvantaged communities, 20% in rural communities, and 10% in Tribal communities.
- **Coalition for Green Capital (\$5 billion award)**, a nonprofit with almost 15 years of experience helping establish and work with dozens of state, local, and nonprofit green banks that have already catalyzed \$20 billion into qualified projects—and that have a pipeline of \$30 billion of demand for green bank capital that could be coupled with more than twice that in private investment. The Coalition for Green Capital's program will

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Biden-Harris Administration Announces \$20 Billion in Grants to Mobilize Private Capital and Deliver Clean Energy and Climate Solutions to Communities Across America (continued)

have particular emphasis on public-private investing and will leverage the existing and growing national network of green banks as a key distribution channel for investment—with at least 50% of investments in low-income and disadvantaged communities.

- **Power Forward Communities (\$2 billion award)**, a nonprofit coalition formed by five of the country's most trusted housing, climate, and community investment groups that is dedicated to decarbonizing and transforming American housing to save homeowners and renters money, reinvest in communities, and tackle the climate crisis. The coalition members—Enterprise Community Partners, LISC (Local Initiatives Support Corporation), Rewiring America, Habitat for Humanity, and United Way—will draw on their decades of experience, which includes deploying over \$100 billion in community-based initiatives and investments, to build and lead a national financing program providing customized and affordable solutions for single-family and multi-family housing owners and developers—with at least 75% of investments in low-income and disadvantaged communities.

Clean Communities Investment Accelerator (CCIA) Selectees

Under the \$6 billion Clean Communities Investment Accelerator, the five selected applicants will establish hubs that provide funding and technical assistance to community lenders working in low-income and disadvantaged communities, providing an immediate pathway to deploy projects in those communities while also building capacity of hundreds of community lenders to finance projects for years. Each of the selectees will provide capitalization funding (typically up to \$10 million per community lender), technical assistance subawards (typically up to \$1 million per community lender), and technical assistance services so that community lenders can provide financial assistance to deploy distributed energy, net-zero buildings, and zero-emissions transportation projects where they are needed most. 100% of capital under the CCIA is dedicated to low-income and disadvantaged communities. Additional details on each of the five selected applicants, including the narrative proposals that were submitted to EPA as part of the application process, can be found on EPA's [Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund CCIA website](#).

The five selected applicants are:

- **Opportunity Finance Network (\$2.29 billion award)**, a ~40-year-old nonprofit CDFI Intermediary that provides capital and capacity building for a national network of 400+ community lenders—predominantly U.S. Treasury-certified CDFI Loan Funds—which collectively hold \$42 billion in assets and serve all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and several U.S. territories.

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Biden-Harris Administration Announces \$20 Billion in Grants to Mobilize Private Capital and Deliver Clean Energy and Climate Solutions to Communities Across America (continued)

- **Inclusiv (\$1.87 billion award)**, a ~50-year-old nonprofit CDFI Intermediary that provides capital and capacity building for a national network of 900+ mission-driven, regulated credit unions—which include CDFIs and financial cooperativas in Puerto Rico—that collectively manage \$330 billion in assets and serve 23 million individuals across the country.
- **Justice Climate Fund (\$940 million award)**, a purpose-built nonprofit supported by an existing ecosystem of coalition members, a national network of more than 1,200 community lenders, and ImpactAssets—an experienced nonprofit with \$3 billion under management—to provide responsible, clean energy-focused capital and capacity building to community lenders across the country.
- **Appalachian Community Capital (\$500 million award)**, a nonprofit CDFI with a decade of experience working with community lenders in Appalachian communities, which is launching the Green Bank for Rural America to deliver clean capital and capacity building assistance to hundreds of community lenders working in coal, energy, underserved rural, and Tribal communities across the United States.
- **Native CDFI Network (\$400 million award)**, a nonprofit that serves as national voice and advocate for the 60+ U.S. Treasury-certified Native CDFIs, which have a presence in 27 states across rural reservation communities as well as urban communities and have a mission to address capital access challenges in Native communities.

Review and Selection Process Information

The eight applicants were selected through a robust process to review and select applications for each of the two competitions. The multi-staged review and selection process included dozens of federal employees—all screened through ethics and conflict of interest checks as well as trained on the program requirements and evaluation criteria—participating in the review and scoring of the selected applications through expert review panels; interviews with senior officials; and recommendations from an expert, interagency senior review team. Additional details on the review and selection process can be found on EPA's [Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund NCIF and CCIA selection process website](#).

EPA anticipates that awards to the selected applicants will be finalized by July 2024 and that projects will be funded by the selected applicants and their partners shortly thereafter. Note that all of the selections are contingent on the resolution of all administrative disputes related to the competitions. [Review frequently asked questions](#) about the selection announcement, including the awards process.

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Biden-Harris Administration Announces \$20 Billion in Grants to Mobilize Private Capital and Deliver Clean Energy and Climate Solutions to Communities Across America (continued)

Informational Webinars

EPA will host informational webinars as part of the program's commitment to public transparency. EPA has scheduled webinars for each of the two programs, with additional webinars to be announced on EPA's GGRF webpage. The details for the scheduled webinars are included below. The webinars will be recorded and posted on EPA's [GGRF webpage](#).

- National Clean Investment Fund webinar: Wednesday, April 10, 2024, 1:00pm – 1:30pm ET. Join the April 10 meeting
- Clean Communities Investment Accelerator webinar: Thursday, April 11, 2024, 1:00pm – 1:30pm ET. Join the April 11 meeting

Additional information can be found on EPA's [GGRF webpage](#).

For further information: EPA Press Office (press@epa.gov)

Source: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Biden-Harris Administration Finalizes Stronger Clean Air Standards for Chemical Plants, Lowering Cancer Risk and Advancing Environmental Justice

Final rule will reduce the number of people with elevated cancer risk by 96% in communities near plants that emit ethylene oxide and chloroprene, advancing President Biden's Cancer Moonshot Initiative

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency issued a final rule that will significantly reduce toxic air pollution from chemical plants, including ethylene oxide and chloroprene. EPA's action will advance President Biden's commitment to environmental justice by slashing more than 6,200 tons of toxic air pollution each year, dramatically reducing the number of people with elevated cancer risk due to toxic air pollution in communities surrounding plants covered by the rule. Once implemented, the rule will reduce both EtO and chloroprene emissions from covered processes and equipment by nearly 80%. A requirement for these facilities to conduct fenceline monitoring for key toxic chemicals is included, and EPA will make the data publicly available to better inform and safeguard nearby communities.

Today's action is the latest in recent weeks to protect communities from EtO pollution, following a final rule to dramatically reduce EtO emissions from commercial sterilization facilities. Both rules advance the Biden Cancer Moonshot, a commitment to ending cancer as we know it, while advancing environmental justice in communities overburdened by toxic chemicals.

Today's final rule delivers critical health protections for communities that Administrator Michael Regan visited as part of his Journey to Justice tour.

"President Biden believes every community in this country deserves to breathe clean air. That's why I took the Journey to Justice tour to communities like St. John the Baptist Parish, where residents have borne the brunt of toxic air for far too long," **said EPA Administrator Michael S. Regan**. "We promised to listen to folks that are suffering from pollution and act to protect them. Today we deliver on that promise with strong final standards to slash pollution, reduce cancer risk, and ensure cleaner air for nearby communities."

"By issuing strong clean air standards and requiring companies to monitor pollution at the fenceline, the Biden-Harris Administration is protecting communities from toxic chemicals that can cause cancer and ensuring people know what is in their air. This critical step advances President Biden's commitment to environmental justice for overburdened communities and will help keep children safe from toxic chemical exposure," **said White House Council on Environmental Quality Chair Brenda Mallory**.

"This announcement is a monumental step towards safeguarding public health and the environment. By slashing over 6,200 tons of toxic air pollutants annually and implementing fenceline monitoring, this addresses health risks in surrounding communities and promotes environmental justice in states like Louisiana. With a substantial reduction of nearly 80% in emissions from covered sources, this is a significant stride towards protecting current and future generations from the harmful effects of these carcinogenic chemicals and demonstrates a path forward for communities and industry to coexist," **said Congressman Troy A. Carter, Sr. (LA-02)**.

Biden-Harris Administration Finalizes Stronger Clean Air Standards for Chemical Plants, Lowering Cancer Risk and Advancing Environmental Justice (continued)

“Today marks a victory in the pursuit for environmental justice, with the final rule poised to significantly reduce the toxic air pollution that harms communities in Texas’s Gulf Coast, Louisiana’s Cancer Alley, and throughout the U.S.,” **said Earthjustice Vice President for Healthy Communities Patrice Simms**. “Setting protective air standards for over 200 chemical plants and requiring fenceline monitoring for some of the most toxic emissions shows a commitment to protecting public health. We look forward to the EPA’s swift implementation and rigorous enforcement of this critical rule.”

Today’s action applies to certain equipment and processes at about 200 plants that make synthetic organic chemicals and a variety of polymers and resins, including neoprene. Once implemented, it will reduce both EtO and chloroprene emissions from covered processes and equipment by nearly 80%. Long-term exposure to these two chemicals can increase the risk of certain types of cancer, such as lymphoma, leukemia, breast cancer and liver cancer. EPA also expects the rule to better protect children, who are more exposed and more susceptible to the effects of toxic chemicals including EtO and chloroprene.

The rule also reduces additional air toxics, such as benzene, 1,3-butadiene, ethylene dichloride and vinyl chloride. By cutting emissions of these chemicals, the rule will reduce the risks of developing cancer from breathing in toxic air pollutants. In addition, the rule will reduce smog-forming volatile organic compounds by 23,700 tons a year.

The final rule will provide critical public health protections for overburdened communities near covered plants. When EPA proposed the rule, it conducted a first-of-its-kind [community risk assessment](#) to provide the public with the best possible information about existing health risks from air toxics exposure and how the proposal would affect them. That assessment examined the air toxics-related risks from all large facilities in communities within about six miles of the plants – including facilities that would not be covered by the rule – to provide a more complete picture of the air toxics-related risk in these communities. The assessment showed that the rule would reduce the number of people who have elevated air toxics-related cancer risk by 96% in those communities – and the final delivers those reductions.

Requirements in the final rule are largely the same as what EPA proposed. However, the agency made several changes to proposed requirements in response to public comments.

The final rule includes a fenceline monitoring requirements for covered processes and equipment that make, use, store or emit EtO, chloroprene, benzene, 1,3-butadiene, ethylene dichloride or vinyl chloride, as proposed, but modifies the compliance deadlines to implement these requirements. EPA had proposed to require monitoring to begin one year after the effective date of the rule. For fenceline monitoring at synthetic organic chemical manufacturing plants, the agency is setting a deadline of two years in response to comments that facilities and laboratories need additional preparation time to begin the monitoring programs. For neoprene production sources, EPA is setting a 90-day deadline for beginning fenceline monitoring of chloroprene emissions.

Biden-Harris Administration Finalizes Stronger Clean Air Standards for Chemical Plants, Lowering Cancer Risk and Advancing Environmental Justice (continued)

For all six pollutants, owners and operators must find the source of the pollution and make repairs if annual average air concentrations of the chemicals are higher than a specified action level at the fence line. The action levels vary depending on the chemical.

To ensure the results of fence line monitoring are available to communities, EPA will make the monitoring data publicly available on its WebFIRE webpage. The fence line monitoring provisions in the final rule are modeled on similar Clean Air Act requirements for petroleum refineries first established in 2015, which have been historically successful in identifying and reducing benzene emissions.

EPA is also working to reduce emissions from other sources of EtO, including from chemical plants that produce polyether polyols, and taking additional actions to address EtO emissions and advance EtO research, such as:

- Investigating additional sources of EtO (e.g., stand-alone warehouses) and opportunities for emissions controls.
- Enforcing existing regulations as appropriate.
- Conducting research to better understand and measure EtO.

[Learn more about the final rule.](#)

For further information: EPA Press Office (press@epa.gov)

Source: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Pennsylvania Energy Development Authority Launches Initiative to Help Pennsylvanians Lower Electricity Costs by Financing Energy Efficiency Upgrades to Their Homes

The Keystone Energy Efficiency Program (KEEP) Home Energy Loan program will provide affordable financing for home energy upgrades installed by qualified contractors

The Pennsylvania Energy Development Authority (PEDA), supported by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), has launched the Keystone Energy Efficiency Program (KEEP) Home Energy Loan program, a new consumer loan program designed to assist Pennsylvania homeowners in reducing their energy costs. PEDA is an independent public authority created by the Commonwealth in 1982 to finance energy and energy-related projects.

The KEEP Home Energy Loan program will offer affordable financing to assist homeowners who are interested in reducing their energy costs by making energy efficient upgrades, such as installing storm windows, ductless heating and cooling, smart thermostats, solar water heaters, electric vehicle chargers, and more. Single-family homeowners and Pennsylvanians residing in owner-occupied multi-unit residential buildings with up to four units are eligible to participate in this program. Improvement work must be performed by contractors approved by the National Energy Improvement Fund (NEIF), an Allentown-based licensed Certified Benefit Corporation lender and national expert in energy efficiency financing that is administering the program on behalf of PEDA.

More details about eligible projects can be found at www.keepeenergyloan.org.

"We are thrilled to be partnering with the National Energy Improvement Fund to help Pennsylvania homeowners pay less for their electricity bills and upgrade their home energy efficiency," said **Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection Interim Acting Secretary Jessica Shirley**, who serves as the chair of PEDA's board of directors. "I encourage all interested homeowners to take advantage of this special loan to finance their energy-focused home improvement projects."

"We are excited to be able to offer financing that will help Pennsylvania residents improve their homes, lower their energy bills, and increase comfort and safety," said **Acting PEDA Executive Director Geoff Bristow**. "The KEEP Home Energy Loan is just the first of what we plan to be a robust lineup of financing programs supporting clean and efficient energy improvement projects for residents, businesses, schools, and local governments across PA."

"NEIF has been responsible for over \$900 million in energy efficiency financing and has been an innovator in some of the nation's most successful energy financing programs. NEIF's focus is on helping homeowners increase their homes' comfort and energy savings by making quality energy improvements, installed by quality contractors, more affordable," said **NEIF Co-Chair and Managing Member Peter Krajsa**.

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Pennsylvania Energy Development Authority Launches Initiative to Help Pennsylvanians Lower Electricity Costs by Financing Energy Efficiency Upgrades to Their Homes (continued)

The KEEP Home Energy Loan program is a key resource for Pennsylvania homeowners to improve their energy efficiency and reduce energy costs. KEEP Home Energy Loans are simple-interest, longer-term, fixed-rate installment financing for projects ranging from \$2,500 to \$25,000. There is no lien on the borrower's home, no fees to the borrower, and no penalty for early repayment. The application process is paperless, and contractors are paid when work is completed to the customer's satisfaction. The interest rate and monthly payment are locked in for the full term of the loan, up to ten years, longer than typically available for unsecured loans from traditional lenders. All homeowners who are making qualifying improvements to their primary residence or secondary home are eligible to apply. Good credit and the ability to repay are required. All income levels are eligible.

PEDA is an independent public financing authority that was created in 1982 by the Pennsylvania Energy Development Authority and Emergency Powers Act and was revitalized through an April 8, 2004, Executive Order. The KEEP Home Energy Loan is the first financing product of the PEDA Energy Accelerator Program (EAP). The EAP is a PEDA-run collection of clean energy financing products and PEDA plans to continue to launch new financing products related to clean energy and energy efficiency in the future.

For more information on KEEP program, visit www.keepeenergyloan.org.

Source: The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP),