

Conservation Committee Report

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Jack Walters—Conservation Chairman

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Biden-Harris Administration Announces \$1M for Environmental Justice Project in West Virginia

As Part of Investing in America Agenda

President Biden's Inflation Reduction Act

Selection announced as part of largest investments through EPA's Environmental Justice Government-to-Government grant programs funded by President Biden's Inflation Reduction Act

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced \$1 million to fund a project in West Virginia that will advance environmental justice as part of President Biden's Investing in America agenda.

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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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Selection announced as part of largest investments through EPA's Environmental Justice Government-to-Government grant programs funded by

Biden-Harris Administration Announces New Get the Lead Out Initiative to Accelerate Removal of Lead Service Lines Nationwide as Part of Investing in America Agenda

New initiative funded by President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law will help 200 underserved communities access technical assistance to iden-

tify and remove lead service lines and ensure safer drinking water

In Washington, D.C., U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Assistant Administrator for Water Radhika Fox announced the Get the Lead Out (GLO) Initiative that will help

ensure safer drinking water for communities as part of President Biden's Investing in America Agenda. Through [the GLO initiative](#), which is funded entirely by the Bipartisan Infrastructure

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Biden-Harris Administration Announces \$1M for Environmental Justice Project in West Virginia (continued)

The West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection (WV DEP), which EPA has selected through its Environmental Justice Government-to-Government programs, will use the funds to ensure disadvantaged communities that have historically suffered from underinvestment have access to clean air and water and climate resilience solutions in alignment with the Biden-Harris administration's Justice40 Initiative.

Thanks to President Biden's Inflation Reduction Act—[the largest climate investment in U.S. history](#)—this funding is a part the largest investment ever announced under these two longstanding EPA programs. This is the first in a series of environmental justice grant announcements the agency will announce before the end of the year.

"No President has invested more in environmental justice than President Biden, and under his leadership we're removing longstanding barriers and meaningfully collaborating with communities to build a healthier future for all," **said EPA Administrator Michael S. Regan**. "Together, these community-driven projects will improve the health, equity, and resilience of communities while setting a blueprint for local solutions that can be applied across the nation."

"This funding to West Virginia is another example of how the Biden-Harris Administration is investing in our most vulnerable places and the governments that serve them," **said EPA Regional Administrator Adam Ortiz**. "Everyone deserves a future with clean water, safe streets, climate resiliency, and most importantly – a government that has the best interest of its communities front of mind."

Environmental Justice Government-to-Government (EJG2G)

EPA's EJG2G provides funding at the state, local, territorial, and Tribal level to support government activities in partnership with community-based organizations that lead to measurable environmental or public health impacts in communities disproportionately burdened by environmental harms.

EPA EJG2G grant selection in West Virginia includes:

- **West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection (WV DEP)** has been selected to receive **\$1M** for the development and piloting of a community engagement process in WV's Northern and Eastern Panhandle to inform fifteen PFAS Action Plans that will identify and address sources of PFAS in raw water sources of public drinking water systems.

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Biden-Harris Administration Announces \$1M for Environmental Justice Project in West Virginia

Additional Background:

From day one of his administration, President Biden has made achieving environmental justice a top priority. And in August 2022, Congress passed, and President Biden signed, the Inflation Reduction Act into law, creating the largest investment in environmental and climate justice in U.S. history. EPA received \$3 billion in appropriations to provide grants and technical assistance for activities advancing environmental and climate justice.

Under the Inflation Reduction Act, EPA has launched and expanded innovative programs to provide more support than ever before to communities that unjustly bear the burdens of environmental harm and pollution. This includes the \$177 million for the creation of 16 Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Centers (EJ TCTACs) to remove barriers to federal resources and help communities pursue funding opportunities like those made available through President Biden's Investing in America Agenda. EPA has also launched and will award funds through the \$550 million [Thriving Communities Grantmaking Program](#) before the end of 2023.

To learn more about environmental justice at EPA, visit: <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice>

Contact: EPA Press Office (press@epa.gov)

Source: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Biden-Harris Administration Announces New Get the Lead Out Initiative to Accelerate Removal of Lead Service Lines Nationwide as Part of Investing in America Agenda (continued)

Law and is in partnership with the Department of Labor, EPA will partner with 200 underserved communities nationwide to provide the technical assistance they need to identify and remove lead service lines. As part of the Biden-Harris Administration's whole-of-government effort to tackle lead exposure, EPA will help communities remove the barriers to lead pipe removal. GLO will specifically help participating communities identify lead services lines, develop replacement plans, and apply for funding to get the lead out. Communities seeking to access GLO Initiative resources can request assistance by completing the [WaterTA request form](#) on EPA's [WaterTA website](#).

"An estimated 9.2 million pipes that provide drinking water to homes across the United States still contain lead, and they are most commonly found in older homes. This means they disproportionately impact families with the fewest resources to remove them. That's why this new initiative is so critical – it will provide the kind of assistance that's needed to accelerate the removal of lead where it's needed most," **said EPA Assistant Administrator for Water Radhika Fox**. "Thanks to President Biden's Investing in America agenda, EPA is positioned to help connect more communities to historic federal funding through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and move our country closer to President Biden's goal of getting 100% of lead pipes out of water-once and for all."

"Clean water is essential to our health and wellbeing. Yet, lead service lines exist in every state across our country, carrying drinking water to millions of homes and putting families at risk of a number of serious health problems," **said Senator Tom Carper, Chairman of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee (DE)**. "Thanks to our unprecedented investments in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, EPA is helping provide more communities with the necessary tools to find and replace sources of lead in their drinking water systems. I applaud the Biden Administration for their work to ensure that more Americans have access to safe, reliable, and clean drinking water, especially those with the greatest need."

"Every American has a fundamental right to clean, safe drinking water. That's why I fought to make sure that the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law included funding to remove and replace dangerous lead service lines that continue to contaminate millions of Americans' drinking water," **said House Energy and Commerce Committee Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr (NJ-06)**. "Today's announcement from EPA ensures that hundreds of communities across the country will soon get the resources they need and the relief they deserve to address this public health crisis. I'm grateful that EPA and the Biden Administration have been such strong partners in this fight, and I look forward to the day when every family can trust the water coming out of their tap."

"Throughout my years in Congress, I have pushed to repair our crumbling water systems because I believe that no one should be drinking water from lead pipes," **said Congressman Paul Tonko, Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Environment, Manufacturing, and Critical Materials**.

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Biden-Harris Administration Announces New Get the Lead Out Initiative to Accelerate Removal of Lead Service Lines Nationwide as Part of Investing in America Agenda (continued)

“I was thrilled to take vital steps in that effort with the enactment of key provisions in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to invest in water and wastewater infrastructure, and EPA’s exciting announcement today brings us even closer to a lead-free future. Grateful to this administration for their dedicated work to ensure every community and household has access to safe, clean drinking water.”

“President Biden and Vice President Harris believe that no parent should have to worry that their child might be exposed to lead when they take a sip of water,” **said Senior Advisor to President Biden and White House Infrastructure Implementation Coordinator Mitch Landrieu.** “That’s exactly why the President’s Investing in America agenda includes a historic \$50 billion to deliver safe, clean water across America. Through this initiative, funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, we can provide resources needed to reach our goal of removing every lead service line in the country.”

“President Biden launched the most ambitious strategy in history to replace all lead service lines across the country. Today, less than a year after piloting the Get the Lead Out Initiative, we celebrate another milestone on our way to meeting that historic goal – bringing five times as many communities nationwide into the fold for lead service line replacement,” **said White House National Climate Advisor Ali Zaidi.** “The ‘GLO’ initiative is a bright example of the President’s progress in delivering clean, safe drinking water to all communities through and with partners.”

Signed in 2021, the [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law](#) provided a historic \$50 billion investment in water and wastewater infrastructure, dedicating more than \$15 billion to replacing lead service lines. EPA is committed to ensuring every community, particularly underserved and disadvantaged communities, can access their fair share of this unprecedented investment through a robust portfolio of Water Technical Assistance (WaterTA) programs, such as GLO.

EPA is committed to providing meaningful opportunities for community and state support through peer exchange and learning. Through GLO, EPA will develop tools and case studies to share information and best practices between the Agency, state and Tribal programs, water system managers, and community leaders.

Communities can learn more about EPA’s WaterTA programs, apply to become a GLO Initiative community, and find other assistance on [EPA’s WaterTA website](#).

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Biden-Harris Administration Announces New Get the Lead Out Initiative to Accelerate Removal of Lead Service Lines Nationwide as Part of Investing in America Agenda (continued)

Background

Through its [Lead Pipe and Paint Action Plan](#) and Get the Lead Out Partnership, the Biden-Harris Administration has made accelerating the removal of lead service lines a top priority, with a goal of replacing 100% of lead service lines. EPA is committed to using every tool available including our statutory authority under the Safe Drinking Water Act, water technical assistance, infrastructure investments, and more to replace lead pipes and protect children and communities across America from lead in drinking water.

The GLO Initiative also builds on [EPA's "Lead Service Line Replacement Accelerators"](#) initiative, which is in partnership with the Department of Labor, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Wisconsin. Through the Accelerators, EPA provides hands-on support to guide 40 communities in those states through the process of lead service line removals, from start to finish. This includes support in developing lead service line replacement plans, conducting inventories to identify lead pipes, increasing community outreach and education efforts, and supporting applications for Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding. As a result, more communities will be able to access their fair share of federal funds to secure a lead-free future.

Learn more about [EPA's WaterTA services](#) and the [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law's](#) historic \$50 billion investment in America.

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

Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

EPA Launches Prize Challenge to Showcase Electric Transportation in Action

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) launched “My Electric Ride: An EV Transportation Video Challenge,” an exciting prize competition that encourages people to share their personal experiences with electric transportation. The challenge aims to showcase real-world experiences of those who use electrified transportation in everyday life and help inform the public about more sustainable transportation. Interested participants are asked to submit a short (1- to 2-minute) video for a chance to win up to \$3,000.

Participants can submit videos in one of three categories:

Personal Mobility: Electric 2- and 3-wheel personal mobility devices such as e-bikes, e-trikes, e-scooters, or e-cargo bikes.

Electric Vehicles: Electric vehicles such as cars, trucks, or SUVs.

Electric Buses: Electric buses such as school buses, shuttle buses, or transit buses.

The videos will be judged on their creativity, originality, and effectiveness in conveying the positive aspects of electric transportation. EPA will select up to nine winning videos, with each of the three categories having a first, second, and third place winner. Selected videos may be featured on EPA’s website and social media channels.

Information about the video challenge and instructions on how to submit a video can be found on the [EV Transportation Video Challenge webpage](#).

Submissions are due by January 23, 2024.

Background

The transportation sector is currently the largest contributor to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the U.S. Electrifying transportation is key to a more sustainable future by moving people and goods more efficiently. With their increased energy efficiency and zero tailpipe emissions, electric vehicles (including battery electric vehicles and hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicles) can help improve air quality in communities and lower total GHG emissions.

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EPA Launches Prize Challenge to Showcase Electric Transportation in Action (continued)

For more information on why we need to lower greenhouse gas emissions from transportation (i.e., decarbonize), visit: [Why We Need to Decarbonize Transportation](#). For further information: EPA Press Office (press@epa.gov)

Source: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Biden-Harris Administration Announces \$120 Million WIFIA Loan to Strengthen Climate Resilience in Florida

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced a \$120 million Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) loan to the City of Fort Lauderdale, Florida. This funding will improve stormwater management and bolster climate resilience in the city's most flood-prone neighborhoods. Since its creation, EPA's WIFIA program has announced \$19 billion in financing to support 114 projects that are strengthening drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure and creating tens of thousands of jobs.

"With this investment, Fort Lauderdale will strengthen its climate resilience, develop innovative green infrastructure projects and upgrade traditional stormwater systems to reduce flood risk for local residents and businesses," said **EPA Assistant Administrator for Water Radhika Fox**. "Thanks to the Biden-Harris Administration's historic \$50 billion investment in America through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the availability of innovative financing options like WIFIA, EPA continues to provide funding so communities across the country can address urgent water infrastructure concerns."

The City of Fort Lauderdale's Neighborhood Stormwater Improvements Project will enhance climate resilience, upgrade stormwater infrastructure, and reduce water pollution. The City of Fort Lauderdale is at elevated risk of climate impacts, including sea-level rise, elevated groundwater, and more frequent and severe rain events. This WIFIA loan supports implementation of green and gray infrastructure to help manage stormwater in impacted neighborhoods, including many with environmental justice concerns. Additionally, the city will improve water quality in intercoastal waterways by replacing aging, corroding pipelines that leach heavy metals and contaminants.

"We are tremendously grateful to the EPA for granting our city this generous loan as we recover from April's historic flooding and prepare for a resilient future," said **Fort Lauderdale Mayor Dean Trantalis**. "Neighborhoods that are hardest hit by storms including River Oaks, Dorsey-Riverbend, Durrs, Progresso Village, Victoria Park, Melrose Manors, and Southeast Isles will greatly benefit from the stormwater improvements these funds will finance."

"Fort Lauderdale continues its historic commitment to investing in climate resiliency and stormwater mitigation," said **District 1 Commissioner John Herbst**. "This funding from our federal partners will assist us in doing more to improve our infrastructure for the benefit of our residents and visitors."

"A large portion of my district is waterfront with some locations just a short walk from the ocean," said **District 2 Commissioner Steven Glassman**. "As sea level rises, we are grateful for the support from our federal partners in fortifying our beautiful City and will continue to work with the EPA to keep our neighbors safe and resilient."

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Biden-Harris Administration Announces \$120 Million WIFIA Loan to Strengthen Climate Resilience in Florida (continued)

“No community is left behind, including my district; 15 communities which were hit hard during April’s historic floods,” said **Vice Mayor Pam Beasley-Pittman**. “I am grateful as this much-needed support will help us build a stronger and more resilient community for future generations.”

“I was out there with my constituents who were some of the hardest hit during April’s historic floods, most notably in Edgewood and River Oaks, and it was heartbreaking to see the devastation,” said **District 4 Commissioner Warren Sturman**. “Being able to share this wonderful news with my district means so much to me as we continue to recover together.”

The City of Fort Lauderdale will save approximately \$26 million by financing with a WIFIA loan. Investing in local water infrastructure will create approximately 200 jobs.

Learn more about [EPA’s WIFIA Program](#) and water infrastructure investments under the [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law](#).

Background

Established by the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014, the [WIFIA program](#) is a federal loan program administered by EPA. The WIFIA program’s aim is to accelerate investment in the nation’s water infrastructure by providing long-term, low-cost supplemental credit assistance for regionally and nationally significant projects. The WIFIA program has an active pipeline of pending applications for projects that will result in billions of dollars in water infrastructure investment and thousands of jobs.

EPA recently made the 7th round of WIFIA financing available and is currently accepting letters of interest for WIFIA and SWIFIA loans. There is \$6.5 billion available through WIFIA, and \$1 billion is available through SWIFIA, which is a loan program exclusively for State infrastructure financing authority borrowers. EPA is currently accepting letters of interest for WIFIA and SWIFIA loans. Learn more about [submitting a letter of interest for a WIFIA loan](#).

In addition to WIFIA loans, there are many federal funding resources available for communities and utilities to improve vital water and wastewater resources. President Biden’s Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is a once-in-a-generation investment in our nation’s infrastructure and competitiveness. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provides a historic \$50 billion investment in upgrading critical water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure.

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

Source: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

DEP Awards Over \$3.8 Million to Projects Restoring the Health of Local Watersheds

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) awarded over \$3.8 million in grants to 15 projects across Pennsylvania that will help communities restore impaired watersheds.

“Clean water is a key part of a community’s health,” **said DEP Secretary Rich Negrin.** “That’s why cleaning up Pennsylvania waters is vital in ensuring our communities live happier and healthier lives. The Section 319 grant provides resources for watershed-based plans and saturating watersheds with practices that will ultimately help our communities thrive. This helps further our mission of upholding every Pennsylvanian’s right to clean air, pure water, and preservation of natural resources.”

Nonpoint source pollution is water pollution that doesn’t come from a single specific discharge point, such as a pipe, but rather from diffuse sources, which are many smaller or scattered sources from which pollutants may be released. About 95 percent of water-quality-impaired watersheds in Pennsylvania are affected by nonpoint source pollution. Section 319 Nonpoint Source Management Grants focus on reducing:

- Nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment pollution from agricultural activities, urban storm-water runoff, and streambank and shoreline erosion; and
- Iron, aluminum, and acidity pollution associated with energy resource extraction and acid mine drainage (AMD).

The [Section 319 Nonpoint Source Management Grants program](#) supports projects that carry out best management practices (BMPs) specified in Watershed Implementation Plans for [43 watersheds around the state](#), with special consideration for projects in Pennsylvania’s share of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. The program also supports development of new Watershed Implementation Plans for additional impaired watersheds.

The following projects received Section 319 Grants:

Allegheny County:

- Etna Borough Green Streets Phase 5.1 Construction for Phase 5.1 of Etna Borough’s Green Streetscape project

Bedford County:

- AMD Remediation Construction Completion of the Sandy Run SA0-D17 AMD remediation project

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DEP Awards Over \$3.8 Million to Projects Restoring the Health of Local Watersheds (continued)

Bucks County:

- Dairy Waste Storage BMP Implementation

Centre County:

- Implementing the Halfmoon 319 WIP on Priority Parcels

Chester County:

- Clean Water for Octoraro Communities and Ecosystems: Increasing Capacity for the Octoraro Source Water Collaborative

Lancaster County:

- Pequea Creek Watershed Implementation Plan: Water Monitoring Program & Expedited Project Design Program
- Conewago and Conowingo Tributary Focus Project
- Conowingo WIP Update
- Conowingo Creek 10,000 feet of Stream Restoration

Luzerne County:

- Conservation District Abandoned Mine Reclamation Program - East

Mifflin County:

- Upper Kishacoquillas Creek Watershed: Agricultural Best Management Practices Implementation VII

Schuylkill County:

- Clinton #2 and Tracy Overflow AMD Discharges Treatment System Design
- Kaska Mine Discharge Treatment System Design

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DEP Awards Over \$3.8 Million to Projects Restoring the Health of Local Watersheds (continued)

Statewide Project:

- Conservation District Demonstration Project: Remediation of AMD, Western PA

York County:

- UNT to Codorus Creek Stream Restoration Design and Permitting
- Codorus Creek WIP Update

The projects in Pennsylvania's share of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed also advance Countywide Action Plan priority initiatives and the state Phase 3 Watershed Implementation Plan to improve the health of the watershed.

Grant funding is provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and authorized through Section 319(h) of the federal Water Pollution Control Act.

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

Source: The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

Biden-Harris Administration Proposes Ban on Trichloroethylene to Protect Public from Toxic Chemical Known to Cause Serious Health Risks

Proposal aligns with President Biden's Cancer Moonshot by reducing toxic exposures known to cause cancer

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced a proposal to ban all uses of [trichloroethylene \(TCE\)](#), an extremely toxic chemical known to cause serious health risks including cancer, neurotoxicity, and reproductive toxicity. TCE is used in cleaning and furniture care products, degreasers, brake cleaners, and tire repair sealants, and a variety of safer alternatives are readily available for many uses. This action, taken under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), would protect people from these health risks by banning the manufacture, processing, and distribution of TCE for all uses. EPA's proposed risk management rule would take effect in one year for consumer products and most commercial uses and would implement stringent worker protections on the limited remaining commercial and industrial uses that would be phased down over a longer period.

The proposal's expected exposure reductions to prevent cancer before it starts aligns with [President Biden's Cancer Moonshot](#), a whole-of-government approach to end cancer as we know it. The proposal also advances the President's historic commitment to environmental justice which seeks to address impacts of underinvestment in communities overburdened by legacy pollution and environmental hazards.

"Today, EPA is taking a vital step in our efforts to advance President Biden's Cancer Moonshot and protect people from cancer and other serious health risks," said **EPA Deputy Administrator Janet McCabe**. "The science is loud and clear on TCE. It is a dangerous toxic chemical and proposing to ban it will protect families, workers, and communities."

"For far too long, TCE has left a toxic legacy in communities across America. Today, EPA is taking a major step to protect people from exposure to this cancer-causing chemical," said **Assistant Administrator for the Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention Michal Freedhoff**. "Today's proposal to end these unsafe, unrestricted uses of TCE will prevent future contamination to land and drinking water and deliver the chemical safety protections this nation deserves."

"We celebrate the EPA's proposed ban on all uses of cancer-causing trichloroethylene, we remember the children such as Jimmy Anderson who were killed by corporate pollution, and we dedicate ourselves to cleaning up the air, water, and soil in communities everywhere," said **Senator Ed Markey**. "Since Anne and I met in 1980, we have been partners in the effort to clean up Woburn, to get justice for her son, and to save other families from seeing their children fall sick as a result of contamination. Thanks to the advocacy of Anne Anderson and the action of the EPA, the era of corporations using communities like Woburn as dumping grounds for toxic TCE is over."

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Biden-Harris Administration Proposes Ban on Trichloroethylene to Protect Public from Toxic Chemical Known to Cause Serious Health Risks (continued)

EPA's proposed risk management rule would prohibit most uses of TCE within one year, including TCE manufacture and processing for most commercial and all consumer products. Within this one-year timeframe, most people who are likely to be exposed to TCE would be protected, including workers in many sectors, all consumers, and many communities. For the majority of uses of TCE as a solvent, including consumer products, safer alternatives to TCE are readily available. For limited uses of TCE, such as critical Federal Agency uses, battery separators used to make electric vehicle batteries, and the manufacture of certain refrigerants that are being phased down nationally while industry transitions to more climate-friendly refrigerants, the proposal would provide a longer transition period while requiring stringent worker protections to reduce exposures in the near-term.

Further, to support cleanup activities at sites of past TCE contamination (e.g., Superfund sites), EPA is proposing to allow for essential lab use and proper disposal of TCE wastewater to continue for 50 years, also subject to workplace protections.

EPA will accept public comments on the proposed rule for TCE for 45 days following publication in the Federal Register via docket EPA-HQ-OPPT-2020-0642 at www.regulations.gov.

EPA will also host a public webinar targeted to employers and workers, but useful for anyone looking for an overview of the proposed regulatory action. The date, time and registration information will be announced soon.

BACKGROUND

TCE is a solvent used in cleaning and furniture care products, degreasers, and for automotive care such as tire repair and brake cleaners. Commercially, it is also used for vapor degreasing items such as metal parts used in aircraft or other machinery, as an intermediate in the manufacturing of certain refrigerants that are already being phased down nationally, and in the production of battery separators used in electric vehicles and other transportation, security, and defense systems.

For decades, communities have suffered from adverse health effects due to TCE contamination. TCE is commonly found at Superfund sites as a contaminant in soil and groundwater. EPA has worked extensively to clean up TCE contamination, but if rules like the one EPA is proposing today under the reformed 2016 TSCA had been in place decades ago, many of these communities might not have been subjected to harmful TCE exposure in the first place.

EPA found that TCE causes liver cancer, kidney cancer, and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. It also causes damage to the central nervous system, liver, kidneys, immune system, reproductive organs, and is dangerous for fetal development. These risks are present even at very small concentrations of TCE. EPA also found that people living near facilities where TCE is made and used are at higher risk for developing these health conditions.

[Learn more about the rule.](#)

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

Source: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

DEP Releases Draft 2024 Pennsylvania Integrated Water Quality Report

Public comment on the report will be accepted through December 11.

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has released the [draft Pennsylvania 2024 Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report](#) for public comment. The report serves as the biennial update on the health of streams and lakes statewide.

DEP has water quality monitoring stations throughout Pennsylvania that record data year-round and help inform DEP's work to restore waterways when they are not meeting water quality standards. The Shapiro Administration is committed to ensuring every Pennsylvanian has access to clean air and clean water, as guaranteed under the Pennsylvania Constitution.

DEP submits the Integrated Water Quality Report to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the public every two years, as required by the federal Clean Water Act of 1972. Pennsylvania waters are assessed for one or more of four uses—drinking water, fish consumption, aquatic life, and recreational use—and determined to be supporting or impaired. A waterway is classified as “impaired” when it is not meeting water quality standards.

The interactive map in the “2022 to 2024 Changes” section makes it easy for Pennsylvanians to see whether their local lake or stream is supporting or impaired and whether this reflects a change in status over the past two years. With one click, users can see the details on which use (or uses) DEP assessed the waterway for. If it is impaired, they can see both the cause and the source.

For the 2024 report, DEP expanded assessment of waterways, with 7,566 stream miles and 103,777 public lake acres newly assessed or reassessed for a use. The 2024 report also shows water quality restoration, noting that since 2004, approximately 967 miles of streams and 28,727 acres of public lakes have been restored. A color-coded interactive map shows which waterways have been restored for which uses and when.

This report reflects the cumulative assessment of 99 percent (85,030 miles) of stream miles and 99 percent (103,777 acres) of lake acres statewide since Pennsylvania began reporting for the Clean Water Act.

DEP welcomes public comment on the report. Comments can be made online through the [DEP eComment system](#), may be emailed to ecomment@pa.gov, or can be mailed to the DEP Policy Office, Rachel Carson State Office Building, P.O. Box 2063, Harrisburg, PA 17105. All comments must include the commenter's name and address.

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DEP Releases Draft 2024 Pennsylvania Integrated Water Quality Report (continued)

The deadline for public comment is December 11, 2023.

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

Source: The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

EPA Rebuilds Endocrine Disrupter Screening Program to Better Assess Human Endocrine Effects of Pesticides

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is announcing a [strategic plan](#) to ensure that its assessments of pesticides more closely, quickly, and effectively evaluate the potential for endocrine effects in humans. These strategies will also improve EPA's ability to protect against those effects as part of its pesticide decisions under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) and to implement the Endocrine Disruptor Screening Program (EDSP) under section 408(p) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (FFDCA).

"This plan is a major milestone in our efforts to ensure that pesticide decisions continue to protect human health," said **Deputy Assistant Administrator for Pesticide Programs for the Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention Jake Li**. "Starting with our highest priority chemicals, EPA will communicate more transparently our endocrine findings for humans, pulling from existing data when possible, and requesting new data when necessary to evaluate potential estrogen, androgen, and thyroid effects."

[Endocrine systems](#), also referred to as hormone systems, are found in all mammals, birds, fish, and many other living organisms. The systems regulate many biological processes in the body from conception through adulthood and into old age, including the development of the brain and nervous system, the growth and function of the reproductive system, and metabolism and blood sugar levels.

Endocrine disruptors are chemicals that mimic, block, or disrupt the normal function of hormones. Following the 1996 amendment of FFDCA, EPA established EDSP to evaluate how pesticides and other chemicals may affect estrogen, androgen, and thyroid systems. Since then, EPA has encountered several challenges with implementing EDSP. For example, the Agency has historically lacked scientific methods to rapidly and cost-effectively test thousands of chemicals for endocrine-disrupting effects. Further, EPA's FIFRA decisions rarely explained whether or how they fully obtained all needed endocrine data or complied with FFDCA by protecting humans from potential endocrine effects. EPA staff also received minimal support and direction from leadership in the last Administration to implement EDSP. Because of these and other issues, the Office of Inspector General issued a report in 2021 concluding that the Agency had made limited progress in implementing EDSP and recommending, among other things, that the Agency develop an EDSP strategic plan.

The strategic plan and supporting documents released today advance EDSP in several unprecedented ways.

EPA will use its FIFRA process to obtain endocrine data and make endocrine decisions for human health. Going forward, EPA will use its existing FIFRA data collection authorities to obtain the data it needs to make both FIFRA and EDSP decisions on whether the pesticide impacts the human estrogen, androgen, and thyroid systems, and will require any needed protections. Given the large number of pesticides awaiting these decisions, EPA is prioritizing the approximately 400 conventional pesticide active ingredients that are being registered for the first time or undergoing [registration review](#).

EPA Rebuilds Endocrine Disrupter Screening Program to Better Assess Human Endocrine Effects of Pesticides (continued)

EPA will make endocrine decisions related to human health more expeditiously by using existing data when possible. EPA routinely obtains data under FIFRA that are identical or comparable to data that EPA would have obtained through EDSP. Additionally, other existing studies may also inform EDSP findings. Where these data are sufficient to support EDSP findings under FFDCA, EPA will make those findings without seeking additional data. This minimizes duplicative and expensive animal testing and expedites EPA's ability to make those findings without waiting for new studies. To support the strategic plan, EPA is releasing a science paper that addresses longstanding questions about which types of existing data can inform endocrine findings under FIFRA and FFDCA.

After evaluating available data for 403 conventional pesticides, EPA has determined it has adequate estrogen and androgen data for 86 of these chemicals. Thus, as part of registration review, after assessing for potential thyroid effects, EPA can make final EDSP decisions on the potential for these chemicals to impact the human estrogen, androgen, and thyroid systems. Similarly, EPA has determined it has sufficient data for 52 pesticide chemicals (50 conventional active ingredients and two inert ingredients) it prioritized in 2009 to assess the potential for these chemicals to impact the human estrogen, androgen, and thyroid systems. Now, as a supplement to the strategic plan, the Agency is communicating its final EDSP decisions relating to impacts on the human estrogen, androgen, and thyroid pathways for these 52 chemicals.

Because the science on the human endocrine system evolves constantly, especially for thyroid, EPA anticipates seeking in 2025 scientific peer review on scientific advancements and on its current approach to thyroid assessments. The Agency will then determine whether to update its approach.

In the near-term, EPA will require additional endocrine data for human health for 30 pesticides. EPA has identified 30 high-priority pesticides that require additional data on potential human estrogen and/or androgen effects. These pesticides are considered high priority because preliminary data indicate the chemicals may cause activity in the endocrine system. EPA is seeking available data or information on these chemicals for 60 days as part of a public comment period. Additionally, to fill any remaining data gaps, the Agency intends to issue FIFRA human health data requests for these chemicals in the spring of 2024. EPA is also seeking available data or other information to evaluate endocrine data needs for a second group of 126 conventional pesticides for which the Agency's initial analysis has found limited endocrine data. For 161 additional conventional pesticides, the Agency will determine which ones it needs to obtain updated endocrine data for in the coming years as part of registration review.

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EPA Rebuilds Endocrine Disrupter Screening Program to Better Assess Human Endocrine Effects of Pesticides (continued)

The comment period for this action will open Friday, October 27. Once available, interested parties can submit data or a comment in docket EPA-HQ-OPP-2023-0474 at the [Regulations page](#).

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

Source: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

EPA Launches Online Tool Providing Energy Use Data and Insights from ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager®

New web tool shows energy use data from 150,000 commercial and multi-family buildings

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is announcing the launch of a web-based tool that enables users to explore aggregate energy use data from more than 150,000 commercial and multi-family buildings in the United States. The new Data Explorer tool will help building managers unlock potential savings based on the data from ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager®, the nation's largest energy benchmarking platform for commercial and multifamily buildings. The Portfolio Manager Data Explorer is the latest in a suite of tools from EPA to help propel the adoption of energy-efficiency practices through market-based information.

"Improving the energy efficiency of our commercial and multifamily buildings is critical to reaching our nation's ambitious climate goals," **said EPA Administrator Michael S. Regan.** "By providing greater transparency into energy use trends across regions and building types, users will be better equipped to target investment, shape policy, and unlock the untapped savings potential of more than 6 million buildings across the nation."

With the Portfolio Manager Data Explorer, users can quickly understand how the energy use of buildings in Portfolio Manager varies based on the type of building, where it is located, its size, and a variety of key metrics. Building owners and managers can access more granular comparative metrics to see how their buildings perform against similar buildings in their area, and policymakers can view and download energy use metrics at the local and state level to refine building performance policies.

Data in the Portfolio Manager Data Explorer comes from EPA's ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager, an online energy measurement and tracking tool that serves as a trusted platform for building owners and managers, energy service and product providers, and building performance policies across the nation. EPA conducted a rigorous process to clean the data, with the final dataset for each year including over 150,000 U.S. properties of all types. To ensure privacy, searching for an individual property is not possible and a query must return six or more properties to show aggregated results.

[Access the tool and user guide.](#)

About ENERGY STAR

ENERGY STAR® is the government-backed symbol for energy efficiency, providing simple, credible, and unbiased information that consumers and businesses rely on to make well-informed decisions. Thousands of industrial, commercial, utility, state, and local organizations rely on their partnership with EPA to deliver cost-saving energy efficiency solutions. Since 1992, ENERGY STAR and its partners helped American families and businesses avoid more than \$500 billion in energy costs and achieve more than 4 billion metric tons of greenhouse gas reductions. More background information about ENERGY STAR's impacts.

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

Source: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Shapiro Administration Announces \$16 Million in Grants for Electric Grid Resilience Projects

Concept papers will be accepted through November 14, 2023

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is seeking applications for innovative, advanced, and transformative projects resulting in a more resilient and reliable electric grid. This program will help transform Pennsylvania's electric grid in the face of growing climate threats and an evolving electric infrastructure. These projects will also promote the expansion of clean energy generation, workforce benefits, and positive outcomes in disadvantaged communities.

The first round of [Pennsylvania Grid Resilience Grants Program](#) funding will provide \$16 million in competitive grants for resilience measures intended to mitigate the impact of electric grid disruptive events. This new program advances important energy security, climate, and hazard mitigation goals for the Commonwealth.

"It is critical that we support efforts working toward reliable, clean, and affordable power in our Commonwealth," said **DEP Interim Acting Secretary Jessica Shirley**. "Funding like this makes it possible for applicants to reach for innovation and transformation, which in turn, benefits all Pennsylvanians. DEP is privileged to award these funds, and we look forward to seeing the ground-breaking projects these applicants propose."

Concept papers will be received any time after the grant opening date until the deadline of November 14, 2023 at 11:59 PM. Timeline is subject to change. Applicants will be notified of changes.

Eligible Applicants and Projects

The following applicants are eligible for grants:

- Electric grid, transmission, distribution, or storage operators/providers
- Electricity generators
- Fuel suppliers

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Shapiro Administration Announces \$16 Million in Grants for Electric Grid Resilience Projects (continued)

Eligible Resilience Measures

The following resilience measures intended to mitigate the impact of disruptive events are eligible for grants:

- Hardening grid assets
- Real-time control and coordination
- Tools to support modeling and analysis

Applicants can contact the DEP Energy Programs Office at RA-EPPAGRIDRESILIENC@pa.gov with questions or to request clarification about the program documents.

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

Source: The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

Six Counties Return to Normal and 15 Counties Remain in Drought Watch or Drought Warning

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) announced, after a meeting of the Commonwealth Drought Task Force, that six counties will return to normal, with 15 counties in drought watch or drought warning.

Drought watch has been lifted for Berks, Chester, Clarion, Fayette, Lehigh, and Venango counties.

Adams, Bucks, Cameron, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Fulton, Huntingdon, Lancaster, Lebanon, Montgomery, Northampton, and Perry counties remain on drought watch.

Clinton County will return to Drought Watch. Lock Haven City Authority and Suburban Lock Haven Water Authority in Clinton County are currently experiencing supply issues and have requested customers to reduce their water usage where possible.

York County will continue to be in drought warning to support the efforts of water suppliers and their customers to conserve water.

In addition to the multiple public water suppliers implementing voluntary or mandatory water conservation, we see lingering year-to-date precipitation deficits and a handful of groundwater wells that have not fully recovered.

For a [map](#) of drought declarations updated daily, see the [DEP drought web page](#).

Residents on drought watch are asked to reduce their individual water use by 5 to 10 percent, or a reduction of three to six gallons of water per day. Residents on drought warning are asked to reduce their individual water use by 10 to 15 percent, or a reduction of six to nine gallons of water per day.

Varying localized conditions may lead water suppliers or municipalities to ask residents for more stringent conservation actions. See the [list of public water suppliers](#) that have requested or mandated water conservation in their communities.

Ways to Conserve Water at Home

There are many ways to conserve water at home, including:

- Run the dishwasher and washing machine less often, and only with full loads.
- Shorten the time you let the water run to warm up before showering and take shorter showers. The shower and toilet are the two biggest indoor water guzzlers.

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Six Counties Return to Normal and 15 Counties Remain in Drought Watch or Drought Warning (continued)

- Check for and repair household leaks. For example, a leaking toilet can waste up to 200 gallons of water daily.
- Install low-flow plumbing fixtures and aerators on faucets.
- Replace older appliances with high-efficiency, front-loading models that use about 30% less water and 40-50% less energy.

Find more tips at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Start Saving website.

How DEP Determines Drought Conditions

To determine drought conditions, DEP assesses information from public water suppliers and data on four indicators: precipitation, surface water (stream and river) flow, groundwater level, and soil moisture.

The DEP Drought Coordinator monitors the indicators in close partnership with the [U.S. Geological Survey \(USGS\)](#), which maintains gauges in streams and wells in many locations across Pennsylvania.

There are normal ranges for all four indicators. DEP makes drought status recommendations after assessing departures from these ranges for all indicators for periods of 3-12 months. For a map that's updated daily to show the status of all four indicators for each county, see the [USGS Pennsylvania drought condition monitoring website](#).

DEP shares these data and its recommendations with the state and federal agencies and other organizations that make up the Commonwealth Drought Task Force. Declarations are determined by DEP, with the concurrence of the task force.

For more information on how DEP monitors conditions and makes drought status declarations, see the [drought management fact sheet](#).

Source: The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

EPA Announces Winners of the 2023 Green Chemistry Challenge Awards

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is announcing the winners of the 2023 Green Chemistry Challenge Awards for new and innovative green chemistry technologies. Through the design of chemical products and processes that reduce or eliminate the generation and use of hazardous substances, this year's winners have developed solutions to significant environmental challenges such as climate change and spur innovation and economic development.

"All of us benefit from advances in green chemistry as part of prevention pollution in communities, especially where residents continue to suffer from disproportionate levels of pollution," said **EPA Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention Deputy Assistant Administrator Jennie Romer**. "Green chemistry can play a vital role in protecting human health and the environment by increasing efficiency, avoiding hazardous chemicals and preventing waste while improving the competitiveness of American companies."

An independent panel of technical experts convened by the American Chemical Society Green Chemistry Institute formally judged the 2023 submissions and made recommendations to EPA. The winners are being recognized at a ceremony today in Washington, D.C.

The 2023 Green Chemistry Challenge Award winners are:

Academic Category: University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, for developing new ways to refine common agricultural waste such as rice hulls into materials that can be used in lithium-ion batteries and other products which are important for the transition to green energy. The new processes can replace the energy and carbon intensive methods currently used to obtain silicon metals.

Design of Greener Chemicals: The Clorox Company, Oakland, California, for designing Clorox EcoClean™ Disinfecting Cleaner, a [Design for the Environment](#)-certified disinfecting cleaner that can be used without personal protective equipment, is formulated without alcohol and can be used safely on most surfaces without bleaching. The product disinfects 99.999% of illness-causing germs in two minutes or less when used as directed.

Greener Synthetic Pathways: Solugen, Houston, Texas, for developing the Bioforge™, a chemical manufacturing platform that converts plant-derived substances into a range of materials that have historically been made from fossil fuels — without resulting emissions or waste. Materials made in the Bioforge™ include those used for water treatment and detergents.

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EPA Announces Winners of the 2023 Green Chemistry Challenge Awards (continued)

Greener Reaction Conditions: Captis Aire LLC, East Point, Georgia, for the patent pending CAIRE Technology that captures more than 90% of terpenes, a waste product from the wood manufacturing process, and converts it into valuable chemicals including those used in products such as biofuels, flavors and fragrances. Currently these terpenes can be an air pollutant, an irritant to eyes, lungs and skin, and are commonly burned as waste which releases greenhouse gases.

Small Business Award: Modern Meadow, Nutley, New Jersey, for developing a more efficient textile dyeing process called Bio-FREED™ Powered by Bio-Alloy™ which uses a bio-based protein foam to dye any type of fiber. Compared to traditional dyeing methods, Bio-FREED™ conserves 95% of water, reduces energy consumption by 75%, and utilizes 80% fewer dyes and chemicals. Bio-FREED also does not require a separate step to fix the dye and requires one or even no washes at the end of the dyeing process, compared to 4-7 washes for traditional dyeing.

Specific Environmental Benefit – Climate Change: Air Company, Brooklyn, New York, for developing a technology that mimics photosynthesis to transform the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide into other organic chemicals, producing oxygen as the only byproduct. The technology both removes carbon dioxide from the air by using it as a chemical reactant and reduces the need for fossil fuels by transforming it into fuels, including aviation fuels.

Since the inception of the awards more than a quarter century ago, EPA and the American Chemical Society, which co-sponsors the awards, have received more than 1,800 nominations, and presented awards to 139 technologies that decrease hazardous chemicals and resources, reduce costs and protect public health. Winning technologies are responsible for reducing the use or generation of nearly one billion pounds of hazardous chemicals, saving over 20 billion gallons of water, and eliminating nearly eight billion pounds of carbon dioxide equivalents released to the air.

EPA is currently accepting nominations for the 2024 Green Chemistry Challenge Awards, from companies or institutions that have developed a new green chemistry process or product that helps protect human health and the environment. Nominations are due to EPA by Friday, Dec. 8, 2023.

Visit EPA online to learn more about the [2023 winners](#) and EPA's [Green Chemistry Challenge](#).

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

Source: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

EPA Finalizes Rule to Require Enhanced PFAS Reporting to the Toxics Release Inventory

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) finalized a rule that improves reporting on per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) to the Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) by eliminating an exemption that allowed facilities to avoid reporting information on PFAS when those chemicals were used in small concentrations. Often referred to as “forever chemicals,” PFAS are used at low concentrations in many products, and as a result of removing this reporting exemption, covered industry sectors such as manufacturing, metal mining, and chemical manufacturing, as well as federal facilities that make or use any of the 189 TRI-listed PFAS, will no longer be able to avoid disclosing the quantities of PFAS they manage or release into the environment.

“People deserve to know if they’re being exposed to PFAS through the air they breathe, the water they drink, or while they’re on the job,” said **Assistant Administrator for the Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention Michal Freedhoff**. “Under this new rule, EPA will receive more comprehensive data on PFAS and looks forward to sharing that data with our partners and the public.”

The rule reflects the Biden-Harris Administration’s commitment to address the impacts of these forever chemicals, and advances EPA’s [PFAS Strategic Roadmap](#) to confront the human health and environmental risks of PFAS.

TRI data is reported to EPA annually by facilities in industry sectors such as manufacturing, metal mining, electric power generation, chemical manufacturing and hazardous waste treatment, as well as federal facilities that manufacture, process, or otherwise use notable quantities of [TRI-listed chemicals](#). The data include quantities of chemicals that were released into the environment or otherwise managed as waste. Information collected through TRI allows communities to learn how facilities in their area are managing listed chemicals. The data collected also help support informed decision-making by companies, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and the public. Among the updated online TRI tools, communities can use EPA’s [TRI Toxics Tracker](#) to map the locations of TRI-reporting facilities and find out about their chemical releases, other chemical waste management practices, and pollution prevention activities.

The 2020 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) initially added 172 PFAS to the list of chemicals covered by TRI for the 2021 reporting year and provided a framework to automatically add other PFAS in future years. The NDAA also required facilities to report on those chemicals if they manufacture, process or otherwise use more than 100 pounds of the substance, which is lower than the reporting threshold for most other TRI-listed chemicals.

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EPA Announces Winners of the 2023 Green Chemistry Challenge Awards (continued)

However, the previous Administration codified the NDAA provisions in a manner that did not address the availability of the de-minimis exemption or other burden reduction provisions to the reporting requirement that allowed facilities that report to TRI to disregard and avoid reporting on minimal concentrations of PFAS chemicals.

By designating PFAS as “chemicals of special concern” for TRI-reporting purposes, this rule eliminates the availability of that exemption for TRI-listed PFAS and requires facilities to report on PFAS regardless of their concentration in mixtures, since many PFAS are used in low concentrations in mixtures, and the continued availability of the exemption for PFAS would permit facilities to discount those uses when determining their TRI reporting responsibilities. The rule also makes the previous exemption unavailable for purposes of supplier notification requirements to downstream facilities for all chemicals on the list of chemicals of special concern, which also includes additional chemicals that, like PFAS, remain in the environment for long periods of time and build up in the body like lead, mercury, and dioxins. This change helps ensure that purchasers of mixtures and trade name products containing these chemicals are informed of their presence in mixtures and products they purchase.

The public can view supporting materials in the docket once the rule publishes in the Federal Register.

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

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

Source: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)