WEEKLY CABINET REPORT
Environmental Protection Agency
Week of March 12, 2012

30-60 Day Outlook
In mid-March, EPA expects to propose amendments to the electric generating unit NSPS and add a GHG standard for new, and reconstructed facilities.

On March 22, Administrator Jackson is scheduled to testify before the Senate Environment and Public works Committee.

On March 27-30, Administrator Jackson may attend the "Making Green Growth Happen" conference in Paris, France.

In March, EPA expects to release the draft report "Update to an Inventory of Sources and Environmental Releases of Dioxin-Like Compounds in the U.S. (1987, 1995, 2000)" for external peer review and public comment.

On March 30, EPA is scheduled to post the final IRIS assessment for Soluble Halogenated Platinum Salts and Other Compounds. Platinum is used as a diesel fuel additive and also in jewelry production, automotive emission control catalysts (catalytic converters) and other commercial applications (e.g., oxidation catalysts).

In early April, EPA expects to issue the final clean water protection guidance reaffirming protections for small streams that feed into larger streams, rivers, bays, and coastal waters.

During the week of April 9, EPA is scheduled to release two draft IRIS assessments for external peer review and public comment on ammonia and 1,2,4- and 1,3,5-Trimethylbenzene. Ammonia is used in the agricultural application of fertilizers, the manufacture of pharmaceuticals, water purification, household cleaners, as a refrigerant, and many industries. 1,2,4- and 1,3,5-Trimethylbenzene occurs in oil/gas extraction, special trades, and printing and publishing industries with exposures primarily expected from vehicle emissions.

On April 25, Administrator Jackson is scheduled to testify before the Senate Appropriations Committee.

On April 27, EPA is scheduled to post the final IRIS assessment for ethylene oxide. Ethylene oxide is used in making many consumer products as well as in other commercial and industrial applications such as sterilizing medical and laboratory equipment and fumigating spices.

Policy
As early as the week of March 12, EPA expects to issue a notice of data availability (NODA) related to the proposed rule for §316(b) Cooling Water Intake Existing Facilities, published in April 2011. Section 316(b) of the Clean Water Act requires EPA to ensure that the location, design, construction, and capacity of cooling water intake structures reflect the best technology available to protect aquatic organisms. This NODA makes available for public review new data and information obtained since the proposed rule was published. This includes the results of a willingness-to-pay survey conducted in the Northeast U.S., a summary of 80 significant reports that agency has received, and a discussion of new ideas proposed by the Clean Energy Group since proposal. EPA has developed a desk statement and web content to publicize this NODA.

During the week of March 12, EPA will add nine hazardous waste sites that pose risks to human health and the environment to the General Superfund section of the National Priorities List (NPL). EPA also proposes adding 10 other sites to the list. Superfund is the federal program that investigates and cleans up the most complex, uncontrolled or abandoned hazardous waste sites in the country. The NPL is updated twice a year through a screening process and local stakeholder involvement. Congressional notifications will begin two days prior to release and EPA will have a press release.

On March 15, under settlement agreement, EPA expects to release for public comment the draft guidance for permitting the underground injection of oil and gas related hydraulic fracturing fluids using diesel fuels. The guidance applies to permitting decisions for the Underground Injection Control (UIC) Program where EPA is the permitting authority. EPA is developing guidance to clarify UIC permitting requirements where diesel fuels are used during hydraulic fracturing to ensure that effective oversight of these activities is occurring as required by law. Under the Safe Drinking Water Act, hydraulic fracturing is exempt from regulation under the UIC program except in cases where diesel fuels are used. EPA will reach out to stakeholders and has developed a press release, web content, and a desk statement to publicize this guidance.

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By March 16, under consent decree, EPA is expects to respond to two related Title V citizens' petitions from Zen-Noh Grain Corporation asking that EPA object to two Title V permits for the Nucor Steel pig iron and direct reduced iron (DRI) manufacturing plant. Zen-Noh, whose grain facility is adjacent to the Nucor Steel site, submitted the two Title V petitions. The petitioner is objecting to the way in which the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality justified its decision to permit the DRI and pig iron plants as two separate projects and a lack of records supporting the permit amongst other issues. (Linda please confirm that the updated blurb is on target)

On March 15, EPA is scheduled to announce a final rule on threshold planning quantities for extremely hazardous substances. There are 157 extremely hazardous substance non-reactive solid chemicals which could potentially be affected by this change.

Press
On March 12, EPA is scheduled to release a Ozone and Cardiovascular Health Paper, linking ozone and changes in both the cardiac and vascular systems in healthy young adults for the first time. The controlled human exposure study was conducted by EPA researchers to characterize the effect of ozone on the cardiovascular system. Scientists found inflammation of the vascular system and two risk factors that can lead to a heart attack: a change in heart rate variability and conditions that can prevent blood clots from dissolving.

On March 15, EPA tentatively plans to announce that it is delaying the compliance date of its Water Quality Standards for the State of Florida's Lakes and Flowing Waters (Inland Waters Rule) to allow the State of Florida to complete work on a proposed rulemaking.

In March, USA Today is expected to publish a story about lead smelter sites nationwide and EPA's ability and effectiveness to identify soil contamination during site assessments. The reporter has conducted interviews at the Regional and headquarter level. OSWER will create a website with additional information regarding lead, success stories, links to Agency lead efforts, etc. as a reference for the public and other interested parties.

Non-ARRA grants
- $14,252,000 – Capitalization Grants for Drinking Water State Revolving Funds – Arkansas Natural Resource Commission, Arkansas

Legislative Engagement
On March 5, Acting Assistant Administrator for Toxic Substances Jim Jones is scheduled to meet with Senator Jeff Sessions.

Legal and FOIAs
USA Today is requesting a copy of records turned over to the US Senate Subcommittee on contracting oversight pursuant to its February 28, 2012 request for information on contracts for public relations, publicity, advertising, communications, or similar services.

Politico is requesting a copy of communications regarding EPA's new source performance standards rule for greenhouse gas emissions from new and modified power plants, and a copy of the draft rule proposal sent to the White House OMB on 11/7/2011.

Travel/meetings/speaking engagements for the Administrator
On March 12, Administrator Jackson is scheduled to speak to students and faculty at the Kansas University Environmental Studies Program in Lawrence, KS.

On March 15, Administrator Jackson is scheduled to speak at the 20th Anniversary Energy Star Gala in Washington, DC.

On March 17, Administrator Jackson is scheduled to give the keynote address at the "Shattering the Glass Ceiling: Women and Leadership" discussion with Congressman John Lewis in Atlanta, GA.

Travel/meetings/speaking engagements for the Deputy, Assistant Administrators and Regional Administrators
During the week of March 12, Regional Administrator Susan Hedman is scheduled to serve as a member of the U.S. delegation to the World Water Forum. She is scheduled to participate in a ministerial committee on green economy and green growth on the 13th and present an update on the U.S. - Canada Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement on the 15th in Marseille, France.

On March 12, Acting Assistant Administrator Nancy Stoner is scheduled to be the keynote speaker at a joint meeting of the Association of Clean Water Administrators, the Association of State Drinking Water Administrators, and the Ground Water Protection Council in Alexandria, VA.

On March 12, Deputy Regional Administrator Ira Leighton is scheduled to be joined by the HUD Regional Administrator and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Environmental Secretary at a press event highlighting the Water Sense Program "Fix a Leak Week" in Boston, MA.

On March 12, Regional Administrator Jared Blumenfeld is scheduled to speak at the Society of Toxicology's annual open press meeting to announce a research partnership between EPA's Office of Research and Development and L'Oréal cosmetics company designed to utilize EPA's chemical toxicity forecaster (ToxCast) as an alternative to traditional animal-based toxicity tests and L'Oreal will announce that it is providing the EPA with $1.2 million collaborative research funding in San Francisco, CA.

On March 13, Regional Administrator Shawn Garvin is scheduled to host a closed press roundtable with agricultural stakeholders at the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum. Following the roundtable Shawn is scheduled to participate in a press event at the Museum with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to announce the availability of $4 million in local grants and technical assistance in Havre de Grace, MD.

On March 13, Regional Administrator Jared Blumenfeld is scheduled to convene a meeting with San Joaquin Valley (SJV) community and environmental organizations to discuss their input into the forthcoming SJV Particulate Matter 2.5 air quality planning process in Modesto, CA.

On March 13, Regional Administrator Gwen Keyes Fleming is scheduled to co-host a closed press Energy, Environment, and Conservation Round Table with the Regional Administrators of HUD and GSA in Atlanta, GA.

On March 13, Senior Adviser to the Administrator for the Chesapeake Bay and Anacostia River On March 13, Senior Adviser to the Administrator for the Chesapeake Bay and Anacostia River Jeff Corbin is scheduled to present at a Chesapeake Bay TMDL Public Town Hall Meeting that is being hosted and moderated by Congressman Rigell of Virginia in Virginia Beach, VA.

On March 13, Acting Assistant Administrator Nancy Stoner is scheduled to speak at the California Association of Sanitation Agencies in Washington, DC.

On March 13-14, Deputy Assistant Administrator for the Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response Lisa Feldt and the Deputy Assistant Administrator Barry Breen are scheduled to attend the Airborne Spectral Photometric Environmental Collection Technology Open House in College Park, MD.

On March 14, Regional Administrator Gwendolyn Keyes-Fleming is scheduled to unveil the Spanish-language version of the book "The Magic School Bus Gets Cleaned Up" at an open press event with the Mississippi Department of Education in Biloxi, MS.

On March 14, Assistant Administrator for Air and Radiation Gina McCarthy is scheduled to provide remarks at the Globe 2012 Biennial Conference and Trade Fair on Business and the Environment in Vancouver, Canada. (open press?)

On March 14, Deputy Regional Administrator Ira Leighton is scheduled to give a presentation highlighting community rain gardens at the annual Boston Flower Show. The event is open press and located in Boston, MA.

On March 14, Regional Administrator Shawn Garvin is scheduled to participate in a press event at the Ronald McDonald House that will recognize Fix-A-Leak Week in cooperation with Delta Faucet Co., in Philadelphia, PA.

On March 14, Regional Administrator Al Armendariz is scheduled attend a Fix-A-Leak Week open press kick-off event to highlight retrofits in the 12 non-profit organizations in the Dallas metro area that will save over 2,000,000 gallons and over $9,700 per year in water utility bills. The event will be at the Promise House Emergency Youth Shelter in Oak Cliff, TX.

On March 14, Regional Administrator Jim Martin is scheduled to testify at a public hearing in regarding Colorado's proposed rules for nutrients at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment in Denver, CO.

On March 14, Acting Assistant Administrator Nancy Stoner is scheduled to speak at the Interstate Water Policy Council Washington Roundtable in Washington, DC

On March 15, Regional Administrators Jared Blumenfeld and Al Armendariz are scheduled to meet with Navajo Nation President Shelly and other Navajo Nation officials about a Class III permit to conduct in-situ leach mining of uranium in Albuquerque, NM.

On March 15-16, Assistant Administrator Gina McCarthy and Deputy Assistant Administrator Janet McCabe are scheduled host an energy environment and conversation Roundtable with Northwest Air Directors then tour regional port facilities and meet with tribal representatives in Seattle, WA.

On March 16, Chief of Staff to the Region 2 Administrator Lisa Plevin is scheduled to represent EPA at an open press signing ceremony for a Memorandum of Agreement committing Georgian Court University to green their campus in Lakewood, NJ.

On March 16, Acting Assistant Administrator Nancy Stoner is scheduled to be the keynote speaker at the Alabama River Rally. The event is open press and located in Fairhope, AL.

On March 16, Assistant Administrator for the Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response Mathy Stanislaus is scheduled to meet with representatives from the New York Mayor's office and Department of Environmental Protection's office to discuss the Gowanus Canal Superfund site in Washington, DC.

Other Information

As early as March 12, EPA intends to send to the federal register its proposed NPDES Texas Coastal general permit. The current NPDES Texas Coastal permit general permit covers 36 state lease tracts and 8 operators located in or near the bay and estuaries along the Texas Coast. Drilling fluids, drill cuttings, and produced water are prohibited from being discharged under the Texas Coastal Oil and Gas general permit. EPA issues this permit because the Texas Railroad Commission, which has jurisdiction over oil and gas discharges in Texas, has not requested authorization of the NPDES program. EPA will host a public meeting in Houston on April 11 to discuss the permit. While the proposed permit remains under development, EPA does not expect the proposed changes to draw significant attention. The current permit will expire on July 6, 2012.

During the week of March 12, EPA is scheduled to hold three public hearings in Alaska as part of the public comment period for the NPDES General Permits for Arctic Oil and Gas Exploration activities.

As early as March 14, EPA will release the first round of validated results from 11 home wells in Dimock, Pa. Each week for the next four weeks, EPA will receive a batch of validated results from the approximately 60 homes that were sampled. EPA will share the results with homeowners and will provide general information for interested external stakeholders, i.e., media and elected officials.

On March 14, EPA and Scholastic, Inc, are announcing the release of the Spanish language version of "The Magic School Bus Gets Cleaned Up" – a free special edition book based on the award-winning Scholastic series. EPA and Scholastic first produced a very successful English-language version 5 years ago as an environmental education and literacy resource. Building on the success of the original English version, the new Spanish-language edition provides an opportunity to reach more of the nation's young people.

On March 15, EPA will be honoring a select group of Energy Star partners that have demonstrated outstanding leadership and commitment to protecting America's environment through superior energy efficiency. The 109 Energy Star award winners will be recognized at a ceremony in Washington, DC, which will also kick off EPA's year-long celebration of Energy Star's 20th anniversary. A business roundtable will also be convened to honor the program's 20th anniversary. The roundtable will be moderated by Greg Nelson, Deputy Director of the White House Office of Public Engagement and will include the EPA Administrator with a small group of executives from America's leading organizations.

On March 15, 2012, under consent decree, EPA Regional Administrators will be taking multiple actions on regional haze State Implementation Plans (SIPs). A proposed SIP will be approved for Connecticut and a final SIP will be approved for Maine. Regional Administrators will be also be signing individual final decisions on regional haze for Kentucky, the District of Columbia, Tennessee and West Virginia. These actions will approve those states' SIPs with the exception of elements involving the state's choice of best available retrofit controls (BART) for electric generating units for NOx and SO2. EPA will disapprove those portions of the states' SIPs and finalize federal implementation plans (FIPs) for these states when the rule establishing the Cross State Air Pollution Rule (CSAPR) as better than BART is finalized on May 30, 2012. The states expect this approach. These actions are not likely to be controversial with states or sources, but may be with environmental groups several of whom have indicated disagreement with the "CSAPR Better than BART" approach EPA is taking.