Administrator,

This week, ORD's senior leadership met with Henry Darwin in RTP, NC in preparation to deploy our EPA Lean Management System (ELMS) in March. Henry also held a very well attended all-hands meeting and shared a wealth of information with RTP staff.

We are looking forward to hosting you and the European Union delegation next week in RTP to discuss chemical testing and PFAS research, in addition to other topics.

Hot issues

Regional support: Lead in Tribal Drinking Water

In November, Region 6 contacted ORD requesting assistance on a drinking water issue: a juvenile detention center on tribal lands has high lead levels in one of their drinking water taps. ORD provided recommendations on how to isolate the sources of lead via diagnostic sampling. Based on this first round of sampling results, the center replaced faucets and other suspected sources of lead and resampled, but the results still showed lead. This week, ORD provided feedback on this second round of sampling results, which pointed to the brass backflow preventers as the lead source and the need to replace them with a truly lead-free alternative material. Additional plumbing components will be replaced, and the Region will send these brass components to ORD for analysis.

Sterigenics facility visit re: Ethylene Oxide (EtO), Charlotte, NC, February 12.

To inform our research in support of OAR and the regions on instrumentation and methods development for improving Ethylene Oxide (EtO) detection limits, ORD and OAR will visit a Sterigenics facility in Charlotte, NC, which provides ethylene oxide sterilization services. The visit will include a facility tour plus information and detail as to how the facility operates.

Technical support to New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) and EPA Region 2.

ORD is providing expedited scale analysis of two pipe sections exhumed from Newark, NJ in support of NJDEP and Region 2. This work was re-initiated during the shutdown as an excepted activity given the threat to human health. The purpose of ORD's lead pipe scale analysis is to determine how Newark can optimize its water treatment practices to minimize both the corrosion of the lead service lines while also minimizing the formation of disinfection by-products. Development of such optimum practices is essential to minimizing or preventing both the lead contamination and the disinfection by-product contamination. The lead contamination in Newark is believed to be attributable to a lowering of the pH in the city's drinking water. That lowering was done in an effort to reduce the formation of disinfection by-products (halo-acetic acids). It is believed that the lowering of the pH reduced the efficacy of the anti-corrosion treatment the city was using to prevent lead, copper and other metals from leaching out of pipes into the water (with a lower pH, the leaching increased).

EPA's People, Prosperity and the Planet

EPA's People, Prosperity and the Planet (P3) recipients from the University of Tulsa recently concluded their Phase II project- HydroSense: Saving our planet from going down the drain. The objective of the project was to raise attention to the excessive water use to the hotel industry and develop a commercially viable wireless device for monitoring water use from the showers of hotel guest's rooms. The team successfully built an all-in-one device capable of wirelessly transmitting data with the help of a rechargeable battery connected to the device's generator. The team has used their results to educate

students working on the project as well as elementary and middle school aged children that have participated in outreach projects.

Upcoming Major Decisions and events

Meeting with Calgon Carbon on PFAS removal, February 6.

ORD met with representatives of Calgon Carbon regarding PFAS removal and disinfection byproduct reduction capabilities using granular activated carbon (GAC). Calgon Carbon manufactures GAC systems for municipal drinking water treatment. These discussions will inform our research to optimize water treatment.

ECOS ERIS Meeting

On February 11, ORD will participate in a call with Environmental Research Institute of the States (ERIS) President David Paylor to discuss our ongoing engagement between state environmental agencies and EPA ORD. Agenda topics include ECOS and ERIS transitions, state research needs, and planning for the upcoming ECOS Spring Meeting.