Region 1

Hot Topics

Vineyard Wind Meets with EPA to Discuss Second Phase of Offshore Wind Development
On December 18, R1 met with representatives from Vineyard Wind, LLC to discuss development plans for an offshore windfarm in the remainder of their outer continental shelf lease block south of Martha's Vineyard, MA. The new project, known as Vineyard Wind II, is proposed to be 400 MW with two 800 MW options and would be located south of the 800 MW Vineyard Wind I project currently under review.

New Hampshire FIFRA State Plan
The New Hampshire FIFRA lead agency, the Division of Pesticide Control, submitted its NH State Plan for the Certification and Training (C&T) of Pesticide Applicators. R1 completed review of the plan and submitted it this week to the HQ OPP Certification and Worker Protection Branch and the C&T Workgroup for consideration. New Hampshire was the first state in the country to submit a draft plan and is now the first to be reviewed by HQ.

Initial CERCLA Off-Site Rule Notice of Unacceptability Issued
On December 13, R1 issued an Initial Notice of Unacceptability under the CERCLA Off-Site Rule to R.E.D. Technologies, LLC of Portland, CT, a waste transfer facility. The initial notice is based on enforcement actions by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP). A CT DEEP inspection found that R.E.D. Technologies failed to comply with State permit conditions relating to 10-day transfer facility standards and Connecticut's hazardous waste management regulations.

Maine DEP RCRA State Authorization
On December 20, the proposed rule to authorize revisions to Maine's hazardous waste program was published in the Federal Register. The proposed revisions include requirements for land disposal restrictions; waste identification, exclusions and testing; universal wastes; and changes to Maine's base program regulations.

Upcoming Major Decisions and Events

Massachusetts 2016 303(d) List
R1 has completed review of Massachusetts' 2016 303(d) list and plans to approve the list by the end of December. R1 worked closely with Massachusetts DEP during the preparation of both the draft and final versions of the 2016 list as well as the response to comments.

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Region 2

Hot Topics

Newark Sequential Sampling Update
R2 continues to provide laboratory support for Newark as the city conducts sequential sampling at homes to assess if their new corrosion control treatment (orthophosphate) has become effective. At the request of the NJDEP, Newark is increasing the number of sample sites from three to six homes and the frequency of sampling from quarterly to every other month (three homes per month on an alternating basis), respectively. R2's support for the sequential sampling began in May 2019 and includes analyzing the samples for dissolved and total lead, as well as for a full suite of metals.

Saint Gobain-Performance Plastics Superfund Site, Hoosick Falls, NY
After incorporating R2's and NYDEC's comments on a draft air stack monitoring report (the results did not indicate the presence of PFOA), ORD submitted its final report to R2 and NYDEC on December 2. NYDEC's analysis of the ORD report was released to the public December 18. Prior to its release, NYDEC briefed Mayor Allen on the contents of the report. ORD, R2, and NYDEC presented the findings of the report to the Community Participation Work Group.

Coal Combustion Rule (CCR), Dresden, NY
The Lockwood Hills Ash Landfill site sits near the shores of Lake Seneca in Dresden, NY. The site owners maintain no CCR material had been received after October 15 and claimed CCR rule requirements were not applicable to their site. R2's review of site documents determined CCR was placed in the landfill in 2015, 2016, and 2017. The 44.2-acre CCR landfill is considered an existing landfill and must comply with all reporting, certifications, notifications, and monitoring in the CCR rules. Annual Groundwater Monitoring Reports have been required since January 31, 2018. Upon review of the site's CCR webpage, no such reports have been posted.

NJDOH Lead Dust Standard
To comply with EPA's revised standards for lead in dust on floors and window sills to protect children from the harmful effects of lead exposure, NJDOH and NJDCA have indicated their intent to adopt EPA's standards effective January 6, 2020. NJDOH and NJDCA's current dust standards are not specified in their state regulations. Adopting EPA's revisions satisfies this requirement.

River Vale Superfund Site, River Vale, NJ
The six-acre residential site was identified through the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's radium source program as a manufacturing site for the *Atomic Prospector's Kit* (ca. 1955) containing uranium ore. Several locations contaminated with uranium, thorium, and radium were found. Also, several discrete contaminated items were recovered. R2 will support the following planned activities: Quality Assurance Project Plan preparation, confirmatory mapping survey, sample collection, radiochemical and gamma spectroscopy analyses, risk assessment, and data analyses.

Upcoming Major Decisions and Events

RA Lopez Convenes Meeting with NYS Canal Corp. on Superfund Site Reuse
RA Lopez will lead a meeting of R2 leadership, NYS Canal Corp., and the NYS Power Authority (its parent agency) to discuss issues related to reuse of property used by GE as part of the Hudson River Superfund site cleanup. Access to a proposed manufacturing plant in Fort Edward, NY, is the issue that will be addressed. A Texas-based plastic pipe and tube manufacturer wants to build a new plant near the Upper Hudson River.

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Region 3

Hot Topics

EPA to Release Phase III WIP Reviews

This week EPA will release its evaluations of plans by the six Chesapeake Bay watershed states (Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Delaware, West Virginia, and New York) and the District of Columbia to have all programs and practices in place by 2025 to restore the Bay and its tidal waters. An EPA team has completed detailed reviews of the final Phase III Watershed Implementation Plans.

EPA reaches agreement with Innovative Diesel, LLC for Clean Air Act violations (MD)

On December 2, EPA reached an agreement in principle with Innovative Diesel, LLC resolving CAA violations. Innovative is a diesel truck performance upgrade sales facility located in Elkton, MD. In 2017, R3 sent an information request letter to Innovative and, based on their response, issued a Notice of Violation in 2018 describing violations related to their sale of 4,876 defeat devices designed to defeat required emissions controls on vehicles and engines. Under this agreement, Innovative must pay a civil penalty of $150,000. The company has ceased sales and installation of such devices. This settlement is counted under EPA's National Compliance Initiative for Stopping After Market Defeat Devices.

Carlisle PA wins Region 3 Brownfields Award

RA Servidio awarded the new *2019 Mid Atlantic Brownfields People's Choice Award* to the Carlisle, PA, Urban Brownfields Revitalization project at R3's Mid-Atlantic Region Open House at the 2019 Brownfields National Conference in Los Angeles. The awardee was chosen by about 60 voters who attended the Open House. The Carlisle project has transformed several large contaminated industrial sites located in the heart of the downtown area, including the former Carlisle Tire & Wheel site, the IAC site, and the Tyco manufacturing site, into a new mixed used sustainably designed urban redevelopment plan with housing and retail surrounding a new community greenspace. The project was funded through a combination of EPA Brownfields planning and assessment grants provided to the Cumberland County Redevelopment Authority in 2013 and the Borough of Carlisle in 2015.

Five Organizations Send Notice of Intent to Sue EPA for Failure to Issue a FIP on Ozone Transport

On November 27, the Sierra Club and five other organizations represented by EarthJustice sent a Notice of Intent (NOI) to sue EPA under Section 304 of the Clean Air Act alleging that EPA has failed to fulfill a non-discretionary duty to promulgate a Federal Implementation Plan (FIP) to "eliminate eastern upwind states' significant contributions to downwind states' nonattainment and nonmaintenance [sic] of the 2008 ozone standard as expeditiously as practicable and not later than the attainment deadlines faced by downwind states." The NOI alleges that EPA's obligation to promulgate a FIP is due to the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeal's recent vacatur of the Cross-State Air Pollution Rule (CSAPR) Close Out Rule. That rule had purported to satisfy the downwind transport obligations of the 20 states listed in the NOI (which include the R3 states of MD, PA, VA, and WV). The NOI claims that the FIP is required because downwind states must obtain the required Ozone reductions by the 2020 ozone season in order for the downwind states to demonstrate attainment by July 2021.

Wastewater Operator Training Class in Cumberland, MD

On December 12, R3 conducted a full day class titled "Process Control of a Biological Nutrient Removal Facility" at the City of Cumberland wastewater treatment plant. Twenty students attended the training, which included classroom instruction and hands-on exercises. A representative from Virginia Rural Water Association attended the course and requested that EPA conduct the same course in Virginia this winter. This effort supports the agency's workforce development and compliance assistance initiatives.

EPA Approves West Virginia's Nonpoint Source Management Plan

EPA approved West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection's (WVDEP) 2019 Nonpoint Source (NPS) Management Plan, submitted on September 10, in accordance with Section 319 of the Clean Water Act. WVDEP satisfied all conditions for program approval by incorporating the eight key elements pursuant to CWA §319 that characterize an effective and dynamic NPS program. NPS water pollution is a growing threat to

West Virginia's environment and public health. The 2019 Management Plan describes West Virginia's goals and activities during the next five years with regard to grant funding, project implementation, education, outreach, and partnerships to reduce NPS pollution.

EPA Releases its Final State Implementation Plan (SIP) Lean Toolkit

On December 9, EPA transmitted the "State Implementation Plan (SIP) Lean Toolkit for Collaboration Between EPA and Air Agencies" to the Environmental Council of States, the National Association of Clean Air Agencies, the Association of Air Pollution Control Agencies, and other multijurisdictional organizations. The toolkit was developed by the national SIP Lean Team, led by R3 and EPA Headquarters. The voluntary Toolkit is intended to support early engagement between air agencies and EPA in the SIP development process, which is key to timely SIP approval. The Toolkit provides checklists, templates and other tools to help operationalize early engagement. The toolkit is available on EPA's "How EPA Works with States on SIPs" website at [HYPERLINK "https://www.epa.gov/criteria-air-pollutants/how-epa-works-states-sips"].

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Region 4

Hot Topics

Lehigh Cement CAA Multi-Regional Consent Decree
On December 11, the Department of Justice published in the Federal Register notice of lodging of the Consent Decree (CD) with Lehigh Cement and Lehigh White. Comments on the settlement are due within 30 days of the publication date. The CD was lodged December 3.

Ethylene Oxide (GA)
As part of ongoing work with the Becton Dickinson (BD) facility in Covington, GA EPD identified that the facility has a warehouse where they maintain an approximate four to seven-month supply of sterilized products from both their Covington and Madison plants. BD estimated emissions from the warehouse at 0.65 lb/h, equating to greater than 5,000 pounds per year of EtO. In addition to monitoring BD is conducting in the area around the plant where concentrations appear to be at "background levels," the state is also conducting sampling. EPA (R4 and OAQPS) is currently reviewing, at the request of GA EPD, an analysis of potential EtO emissions from the BD Covington warehouse. This site appears to be the only such warehouse in Georgia.

Valdosta Sewage Overflow (GA/FL)
On December 19, R4 held a call with Florida State Senator Bill Montford, FL DEP, GA EPD, and representatives from Senator Marco Rubio's (R- FL) office regarding large quantities of sewage overflowing into the Withlacoochee River in North Central Florida directly impacting Hamilton and Madison Counties. EPA is working with GA EPD and FL DEP on next steps and plans to travel to the area in early January for a face-to-face meeting. This issue is receiving significant media and political interest.

Upcoming Major Decisions and Events

December 18 Acting RA Ashbee coordinated a 35th Avenue site visit for Steven Cook in Birmingham, AL. Members from Senator Doug Jones' (R-AL) and Congresswoman Terri Sewell's (D-AL 7th District) offices of the community participated in the tour. Afterwards, a meeting with Birmingham Mayor Woodfin was held.

December 18 R4 held a soft launch of Smart Sectors on December 18. R4 is focusing on Chemical Manufacturing, including plastics.

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Region 5

Hot Topics

East Chicago Mayor Supports Changed Future Use of USS Lead Zone 1
On December 18, R5 received a letter from East Chicago, IN, Mayor Anthony Copeland stating that he had signed a letter of intent to sell and redevelop zone 1 of the USS Lead Superfund site into a logistics and distribution campus and warehousing complex. None of the property would be used for residential purposes. In addition, the Mayor is pursuing a rezoning of the property from its current residential to a manufacturing zoning district. The mayor previously said the property would continue to be residential and the draft ROD for the site – currently in final review in HQ – would clean up to those standards. R5 is considering the mayor's letter and will work with HQ to determine appropriate next steps.

EPA to Participate in Public Meeting on Michigan Contaminated Plume
At the request of Rep. Debbie Dingell, R5 will participate in a January 16 community meeting to answer questions about the Superfund process and NPL listing. The Gelman site consists of the company facility and a 1,4-dioxane groundwater plume in Washtenaw County that affects parts of Ann Arbor and neighboring townships. In 2017, EPA did a preliminary assessment, but when the state wished to remain the lead and continue negotiations with the company on an adapted consent agreement, EPA accepted the state's recommendation and designated the site as "Other Cleanup Authority (OCA)" - state lead. This year, EPA has reduced its involvement in the site, supporting the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE). Rep. Dingell has been active in trying to facilitate some action on the plume, whether by the state, local entities, and the company agreeing to new work under an adapted consent judgment, or by the state referring the site to EPA to address the persistent groundwater plume. Last week, Rep. Dingell requested EPA to be involved in a pre-meeting (early January) with Michigan EGLE Director Clark and MI Attorney General to be coordinated and prepared for the January 16 meeting.

Follow-up on Former Uranium Site Collapse into Detroit River
EPA participated in a public meeting December 12 on the collapse of an aggregate stone storage site into the Detroit River. The site processed uranium for the atomic bomb program 70 years ago. The meeting was hosted by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE). R5 representatives participated. The meeting was well-attended by the public, local environmental organizations, and various government officials. EGLE and EPA staffers presented the history of the site, answered questions and concerns, and discussed the path forward. Officials repeated no residual radioactivity has been found on the site. EGLE will continue to be the lead and will work with the current owner of the property to address the cleanup of the collapsed dock and associated material and assess if additional sampling and testing are needed. EGLE will also continue to coordinate with local organizations to keep them informed.

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Region 6

Hot Topics

Denka Performance Elastomer, La Place, LA
EPA is preparing to implement a new air monitoring program in early 2020 to replace the existing community monitoring program. EPA is coordinating with LDEQ and has notified the company. Notifications will occur this week, including plans to notify the Parish President and Concerned Citizens of St. John. The new program will involve deploying a network of air monitors (SPods) that will continuously measure VOC concentrations in the ambient air and will collect samples when triggered by high VOC levels. The samples will then be analyzed for chloroprene. The SPod monitoring will be used to better understand the frequency and magnitude of chloroprene spikes. EPA also believes the monitoring may help identify ways that Denka can reduce the occurrence of spikes and thereby further reduce ambient concentrations of chloroprene in the community. EPA is briefing Congressman Graves' office on December 19.

Fifth Ward/Kashmere Gardens, Houston, Texas
Congresswoman Jackson Lee is hosting a community meeting in the Fifth Ward-Houston about the Cancer Study associated with Union Pacific Railyard on December 23. Texas Department of State Health Services study was release in August but is now receiving media attention ([HYPERLINK "https://www.houstonchronicle.com/business/article/Cancer-cluster-identified-in-Houston-neighborhood-14885972.php"]). On December 7, Congresswoman Lee sent a letter to Administrator Wheeler requesting a comprehensive investigation. We are not aware of a request for EPA to attend the December 23 meeting in Houston.

PFAS, Oklahoma
R6, ORD, and ODEQ met to discuss the state's concerns and questions on potential methods of PFAS waste disposal including incineration, since clean-ups of contaminated sites are on the horizon. Some municipal landfills in Oklahoma no longer accept any waste with known PFAS concentrations. ODEQ inquired about the potential for PFAS in drilling fluids and granulated activated carbon from PFAS treatment systems. ORD gave brief summaries of ongoing PFAS research regarding method development, incineration, deep well injection, and landfill disposal.

Mosaic Fertilizer Uncle Sam, Convent, Louisiana
By December 20, EPA anticipates sending a comprehensive letter to Mosaic that will respond to Mosaic's Notice of Force Majeure and Notice of Potential Violation for use of an Emergency Diversion Impoundment. The letter will also articulate the agencies' expectations for the annual submittal of the Site-Specific Water Management Plan, including the annual water balance analysis. The plant has resumed production after a three-month shutdown. Lack of significant rainfall in 2019 has allowed the plant to manage process wastewater inventory at safe levels. LDEQ continues to review Mosaic's Clean Air Act Permit Modification submitted for use of industrial spray evaporators to remove process wastewater. Mosaic has also notified the agencies of its plan to seek LPDES permit modification to install a Reverse Osmosis (RO) unit to treat process wastewater and discharge to the Mississippi River.

Texas Title V Program, Texas
R6 and OAR have been working on a petition order to grant on a claim relating to permit terms and conditions linked to facility operational limits that have been claimed as confidential business information (CBI). In addition, EPA received a response to comments and a proposed permit from TCEQ in early December that contains a CBI claim and other issues that EPA previously granted on in petition orders issued on Texas Title V permits in 2018. These issues are related to the incorporation of permits by rule and deficiency in monitoring requirements. R6 is considering whether to object to the proposed title permit submitted in December and anticipates OAR will forward a Title V petition order to the Administrator for signature in January 2020.

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Louisiana Offshore Oil Port (LOOP), Louisiana
On December 10, LOOP provided an environmental report titled *Marine Terminal Air Quality Analysis* to the Louisiana Offshore Terminal Authority and US Coast Guard. The report concludes that emissions associated with LOOP's offshore operations and vessel loading activities are unlikely to have a significant effect on any Ambient Air Quality Standards, PSD increments or, in general, air quality in areas within State jurisdiction. LOOP's letter also restates LDEQ's position that only Louisiana clean air quality laws apply to LOOP's offshore facilities. R6, OGC, and USCG continue to discuss LOOP's offshore operations in the Outer-Continental Shelf in the Gulf of Mexico.

Saltwater Purges, Oklahoma Corporation Commission, Oklahoma
On December 6, Oklahoma Corporation Commission requested R6 assistance in gathering and processing data associated with purges of saltwater in the state. Saltwater purges are a result of Class II well injection into the Permian and primarily in Kingfisher and Blaine counties. R6 has agreed to provide technical assistance. R6 assisted with similar technical support associated with induced seismicity in Oklahoma.

Performance Partnership Grant, New Mexico
NMED has expressed an interest in obtaining a Performance Partnership Grant. EPA has scheduled training for January 8-10. The training will build a baseline understanding of National Environmental Performance Partnership System and expand that to practical training that leads NMED to their first ever Performance Partnership Agreement in FY2021.

Regional Water Authority, Delaware County, Oklahoma
On December 18, R6 DRA Gray joined OK Secretary Ken Wagner and Cherokee Nation Principal Chief Chuck Hoskin in the ribbon cutting ceremony of a new $16 million drinking water system in Delaware County, OK. The project consolidated five drinking water systems into the Southern Delaware County Regional Water Authority and serves over 2,500 homes. This project utilized $3 million of Drinking Water State Revolving Funds that are jointly administered by the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality and the Oklahoma Water Resources Board.

OIG Single Audit Report, Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans, Louisiana
EPA received a Single Audit Report for the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans highlighting two financial statement findings and one federal award finding pertaining to Urban Waters Small Grants and Environmental Education Grants. R6 must confirm corrective action was implemented by the recipient, including the corrective action plan and milestone dates for addressing the finding by June 4, 2020. R6 must confirm the corrective action by issuing a final management decision to the recipient by the aforementioned date or within 180 days.

OIG Final Report on Air Monitoring During Hurricane Harvey, Houston, Texas
On December 16, the TCEQ issued a written response to the EPA OIG report titled, "EPA Needs to Improve its Emergency Planning to Better Address Air Quality Concerns During Future Disasters."

Upcoming Major Decisions and Events

2008 Ozone Transport SIP, New Mexico
R6 extended the comment period for the New Mexico 2008 Ozone transport action to January 17. Final signature is expected by April 4, 2020.

Exceptional Events Demonstrations, 2017, for PM10, Dona Ana and Luna Counties, New Mexico
By December 20, EPA anticipates concurrence on the NMED requests that certain ambient air monitoring data - particulate matter (PM) - be excluded from regulatory actions. The final Exceptional Event Demonstration package for PM less than 10 microns in diameter was submitted on November 4.

Exceptional Events Demonstrations, 2018 for PM10, Bernalillo County, New Mexico
By December 20, EPA anticipates concurrence on the City of Albuquerque request that certain ambient air monitoring data - particulate matter (PM) - be excluded from regulatory actions. The final Exceptional Event Demonstration package for PM less than 10 microns in diameter was submitted on October 11.

Oklahoma Infrastructure for the 2015 Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards, Oklahoma
By December 27, EPA anticipates approval of Oklahoma's demonstration to meet infrastructure requirements necessary to implement, maintain and enforce the 2015 ozone NAAQS, except for requirements to prevent interference with maintenance of the NAAQS in other states and visibility protections which we will address in future actions.

Albuquerque Second Set of Air Permit SIP Revisions, Bernalillo County, Albuquerque, New Mexico
By December 27, EPA anticipates final approval of the second set of pending air permit related SIP revisions from Albuquerque/Bernalillo County on changes to the NSR rules to exempt gasoline dispensing facilities and emergency RICE engines from permitting. Adverse comments requiring EPA's response were received and addressed in the final FRN.

New Mexico 111(d) Other Solid Waste Incineration Negative Declaration, New Mexico
By December 27, EPA anticipates approval of a direct final action of CAA section 111(d) negative declarations for Other Solid Waste Incineration (OSWI) units in New Mexico, including Albuquerque-Bernalillo County.

Withdrawal of Finding of Substantial Inadequacy of Implementation Plan, Texas
By January 6, EPA anticipates approving a final Federal Register notice withdrawing the SSM SIP call issued to Texas concerning affirmative defense provisions in their SIP that departs from EPA's June 2015 national SIP call action. This notice is limited in scope and applicable to Texas SIP only.

Louisiana SIP Revision for Withdrawal of Stage II Vapor Recovery Systems Requirements, Louisiana
By January 7, EPA anticipates proposed approval to the Louisiana SIP revision to remove Stage II Gasoline Refueling Vapor Recovery Program. On May 30, EPA received a request from Louisiana to withdraw Stage II Vapor Recovery Systems requirements. EPA rulemaking in May 2012 determined that onboard refueling vapor recovery systems were essentially equal to and would soon surpass the emission reductions achieved by Stage II system requirements. States implementing the program could then phase out the program.

Texas Regional Haze Supplemental Proposal Public Hearing, Dallas, Texas
The public comment period for the November 2019 supplemental proposal to modify the Texas Regional Haze SO2 trading program, including adding an assurance level and penalty provisions closes on January 14. R6 held a public hearing on December 9.

January 6	Phillip 66 Meeting, Dallas, TX
January 9	Department of Defense Regional Environmental Coordinators Meeting, Dallas, TX
January 15	EPA/Agriculture Commissioners Annual Meeting, Dallas, TX
January 16	EPA/State Environmental Directors Meeting, Oklahoma City, OK

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Region 7

Hot Topics

Region 7 Focused on Agricultural and Renewable Fuels Stakeholders Engagement
Throughout the week, R7 is participating in events in partnership with the agricultural sector to deliver innovative, environmental solutions that work for rural America and the communities it supports.

- December 17-18: R7 leadership participated in the R7 and R8 State Departments of Agriculture Meeting in Salt Lake City, UT. RA Gulliford outlined R7's four regional priorities:
  - Conduct and support research on Harmful Algal Blooms to better predict and prevent their occurrence;
  - Work with stakeholders to manage prescribed burns in the Flint Hills to minimize smoke impacts to downwind communities;
  - Conduct Chemical Accident Prevention; and
  - Support nutrient reduction strategies and practices, including market-based approaches such as Water Quality Trading.
- December 19: Hosted the 10th Regional Smart Sectors Program meeting at the regional office with representatives from the renewable fuels industry. This sector-based, collaborative approach helps EPA identify and consider more forward-thinking ways to improve environmental outcomes.
- December 19: Distributed National News Release announcing the 2020 Renewable Volume Obligation.
- December 19: Distributed National News Release approving the registration of nine biopesticides for use on hemp and a proposed interim decision on atrazine—a widely used and effective herbicide.
- December 19: Engaged Agricultural stakeholders on social media (Facebook and Twitter).

Cleanup Complete at Lewis and Clark Sawmill Superfund Removal Site
Cleanup actions have successfully concluded at a former wood treating facility in West Alton, MO. The Lewis and Clark Sawmill formerly treated wood with pentachlorophenol, copper napthenate, and diesel at this site. Historical spillage or releases resulted in contamination of soils and other media. Dioxins (by-products of pentachlorophenol production) were also present in the contaminated soils. Approximately 900 cubic yards of contaminated soil and 1,200 gallons of waste oils, copper napthenate, and organic combustibles have been or are in the process of being shipped offsite for disposal.

Residential Yard Cleanups Begin at Newton County Mine Tailings Superfund Site
R7 is starting a Superfund removal action to address lead contamination at residential properties in Newton County, MO. R7's Superfund program is currently planning to address approximately 30 residential properties. The removal action is occurring in parallel with additional remedial investigations at the site.

Successful Completion of Private Well Sampling around Syntex Superfund Site
R7 completed private well sampling at 44 residences near the Syntex Facility Superfund Site in response to public concerns about detections of 1,4-dioxane in groundwater at the site. The Syntex Facility Superfund Site is a 180-acre site in Verona, Missouri where several companies produced Agent Orange or hexacholorophene, contaminating groundwater and soil with dioxin and volatile organic compounds. Cleanup activities are complete and monitoring at the site is ongoing. The public has expressed concerns about the potential for water quality impacts to their private wells, primarily by 1,4-dioxane. In response, last week EPA received access permission from residents to conduct private well sampling from all properties except one and successfully collected samples from 44 residential properties. An additional sampling event for approximately 40 remaining wells will be conducted in January. EPA staff oversaw all aspects of the well sampling and communicated in-person with the residents and local elected officials. The EPA presence in the community was well received as evidenced by the high success rate in getting signed access agreements. The sampling event provided an opportunity for EPA to clarify some of the public's misconceptions about site conditions.

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WaterOne Multi-Agency Emergency Operations Plan Exercise
On December 17, WaterOne hosted a multi-agency exercise on how partners would collaborate and share responsibility in the event of a regional power outage. The tabletop discussion was set up around a regional power outage in Kansas City, KS, that impacts the Hansen Treatment Plant and Johnson County, including pump stations in 16 cities. One facility in Kansas City, KS, has three back-up natural gas generators that will enable WaterOne to fully utilize this facility even with a total power system failure. The discussion is based on how WaterOne would collaborate and share responsibility with our partners to provide a response.

Upcoming Major Decisions and Events

No regional events planned between December 20 and December 26.

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Region 8

Hot Topics

Boulder County Public Health Released PFAS Results from Private Wells in Colorado
The Boulder Daily Camera published information on elevated PFAS levels in three residential drinking water wells near the rural fire station on December 12. EPA is following up to determine if the Fire District will assist the residences with high levels of PFAS in wells to install treatment systems or to obtain alternative water supplies. Additional sampling is planned to learn the extent of the contamination.

FIFRA Pesticide Enforcement Issued Two Notice of Refusal of Admissions (NORA) to Bayer Corporation
FIFRA Imports Program denied entry of 30,000 kilograms of Accalim Herbicide attempting to enter the U.S. through Pembina, ND. The shipments were denied due to false information on their product labels and the EPA required Notice of Admission permits.

Upcoming Major Decisions and Events

Water Quality Standards Disapprovals for Seven Waters in Wyoming
The Water Division intends to issue seven water quality standards disapprovals by December 30. The Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality does not object to any of the disapprovals. R8 coordinated with the Office of Water, Office of Standards and Technology, Standards and Health Protection Division.

RA Signatures
RA Sopkin signed three significant actions this week: Proposed Federal Implementation Plan for the Uinta and Ouray Indian Reservation; Action to reclassify Denver area to "Serious" nonattainment for ozone; and Denver Water Optimal Corrosion Control Treatment Variance.

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Region 9

Hot Topics

CWA Stormwater Settlement
R9 settled with Airtech International, Inc. of Huntington Beach, CA. The agreement requires the company to pay a $95,208 penalty to resolve CWA violations associated with unauthorized stormwater discharges between December 2014 and January 2019. Airtech will also complete a Supplemental Environmental Project of beach cleanups and oyster bed restoration.

Hawaii Chemical Safety Day & ORRT, LEPC & SERC Meetings
R9 participated in meetings and training including a daylong Chemical Safety Day focused on Anhydrous Ammonia and Propane. The December 11 Safety Day brought over 100 people from a wide range of constituencies (e.g., first responders, industry, regulators) to promote emergency management centered around the goal of "prevent them all or stop them small." This approach has protected lives and saved millions of dollars in damages. The training was led by EPA in partnership with Hawaii Department of Health, Honolulu Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC), and Honolulu Fire.

International Volcano Health Hazards Network
EPA participated in a workshop hosted by the IVHHN at the American Geophysical Union in San Francisco on December 14 to begin planning for public health impacts during a mainland U.S. eruption. Attendees included USGS, CDC, ASPR, OSHA, FDA, NIEHS, and FEMA, as well as Hawaii Dept. of Health, Washington State Emergency Management Division, Tuolumne County Dept. of Health, and Cambridge University. The discussion included identifying agencies that would play a role in an eruption crisis, the kinds of threats to public health, and next steps for preparedness planning.

Upcoming Major Decisions and Events

RA Signatures
During the week of December 16, the Acting RA signed the following packages for Federal Register Notice: 1) finalizing approval of San Joaquin Valley's Rule 4901 Wood Burning Fireplaces and Wood Burning Heaters; 2) finalizing approval of the Western Nevada County RACT SIP for the 2008 ozone standard; 3) proposing disapproval of Maricopa Rule 322 and conditional approval of Maricopa Rules 323, 324 regulating combustion sources; 4) finalizing the deadline for submissions of the Extreme nonattainment area requirements for the Coachella Valley for the 1997 ozone standard; and 5) proposing approval of the Coachella Valley 2008 ozone attainment plan.

PCBs in Pier 70 Storm Drain
On December 12, the Port of San Francisco notified EPA that it had discovered PCB levels up to 1,400 ppm in soil in an outfall pipe leading to the San Francisco Bay at the Crane Cove Park site at Pier 70. On December 13, the Port plugged the outfall pipe and storm drain inlets. The source of the PCBs is likely a 2002 release due to vandalism of transformers that was remediated under a TSCA approval. The PCBs in the outfall pipe, as well as any remediation of sediments in the bay, will be addressed in a future TSCA application.

Nevada Brownfields Affordable Housing Project
In early December, the City of Carson City, NV, chose an $18 million, 160-unit affordable housing project for six acres of city-owned land that was assessed in July by brownfields assessment grantee Northern Nevada Development Authority. The assessment cleared the way for development without further environmental cleanup. Initial occupancy of the apartments is expected by December 2021.

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Reducing Impacts to Community and Tribal Water Systems During California Wildfire Season
On December 17, DRA Jordan, Water Division, and the Tribal, Intergovernmental, and Policy Division met with Pacific Gas and Electric to discuss options to minimize impacts to drinking water and wastewater facilities during high-wind Public Safety Power Shutoffs. Follow-up items included formation of a workgroup to focus on improved communication, backup power, and technical assistance for communities and tribes ahead of the 2020 wildfire season.

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Region 10

Hot Topics

State of Alaska Submits Fairbanks North Star Borough PM2.5 Serious State Implementation Plan
On December 13, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation submitted the Fairbanks PM 2.5 Non-Attainment Serious State Implementation Plan (SIP), meeting its consent decree obligation with Citizens for Clean Air and Sierra Club. Also, under a consent decree agreement, EPA will issue a completeness determination for the SIP by January 15. R10 believes the SIP submittal will meet the completeness criteria based on review of drafts of the submission. R10 is preparing a Federal Register Notice for the completeness determination and has coordinated with EPA Headquarters so that we can meet the January 15 deadline. Under the Clean Air Act, EPA has 12 months after issuing the completeness finding (January 15, 2021) to approve or disapprove of Alaska's Serious Plan submittal.

Region 10 News Release: Stop Sale Order for Insecticide Chalk Sold by E-Marketer
On December 20, following OPA concurrence, R10 expects to issue a news release announcing a Stop Sale Order to an E-Marketer for selling unregistered/illegal insecticidal chalk which can easily be mistaken for chalk commonly used by children.

Upcoming Major Decisions and Events

Establishing the Willamette Basin Mercury TMDL (OR)
Following EPA's November 29 disapproval of Oregon's revised mercury TMDL for the Willamette Basin, R10 is on track to meet the statutory and court-ordered deadline to establish a replacement TMDL by December 30. EPA will then be required to issue a public notice for a 30-day public review period before submitting the TMDL to Oregon for inclusion in the state's Water Quality Management Plan. The media has been interested in this issue, so the region will issue a media advisory once the comment period opens and will have a prepared statement for any media inquiries.

Portland Harbor Superfund Site News Release (OR)
On or about January 2, R10 will issue a news release providing an update on recent accomplishments and the status of remedial design agreements at the Portland Harbor Superfund Site. We are in close coordination with OSRTI and OPA on this communication.

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Office of Air and Radiation

Hot Topics

Packages for Signature
- Federal Implementation Plan for Oil and Natural Gas Sources; Uintah and Ouray Indian Reservation in Utah (Region 8 Proposed Rule)
- Revisions to the Petition Provisions of the Title V Permitting Program (Final Rule)
- NESHAP: Petroleum Refinery Sector (Final Rule)
- PAMs Compliance Deadline Extension (Final Rule)
- Metal Can/Coil RTR (Final Rule)
- Cleaner Trucks Initiative (ANPRM)

Packages at OMB for Review
- Vehicle Test Procedure Adjustments for Tier 3 Test Fuel (Proposed Rule; RECEIVED DATE: 02/25/2019)
- Light Duty Greenhouse Gas Program Technical Amendments (Final Rule: RECEIVED DATE 8/19/2019)
- MATS RTR & Cost Review (Final Rule: RECEIVED DATE 10/4/2019)
- Strat Ozone - Section 608 Refrigerant Management – Revisions (Final Rule: RECEIVED DATE 10/4/2019)

Packages Heading to OMB Soon
- Residential Wood Heaters NSPS Amendments (Final Rule)
- Boiler MACT (Proposed Rule)
- MATS Coal Refuse-Fired Units Review (Final Rule)
- Fuels Regulatory Streamlining (Proposed Rule)

Upcoming Major Decisions and Events

January is National Radon Action Month
Throughout January, ORIA's Indoor Environments Division, Regional Offices, and their state grantees will encourage Americans to Test, Fix, and Save a Life as part of National Radon Action Month. The annual outreach campaign will kick off with a series of social media messages and a national press release. Regional public affairs offices will be encouraged to amplify the headquarters announcements. Additional social media messages will be sent throughout the month to emphasize the importance of radon testing and mitigation, and to highlight EPA's radon resources.

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Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention

Hot Topics

Signed, Publication Pending
- Extension of comment period for NMP draft risk evaluation by 10 days, to January 21, 2020.

Recently Signed
- High-Priority Substance Designations under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), signed December 20, meeting another Lautenberg deadline

Action Packages at OMB for Review
- Supplemental NPRM: Long-Chain Perfluoroalkyl Carboxylate (LCPFAC) SNUR
- Final Rule: Chemical Data Reporting (CDR) Rule Revisions; updates to align with new TSCA, improve data collected, and reduce burden
- Report to Congress on Improving Endangered Species Act §7 Consultation Process for Pesticide Registration and Registration Review; describes progress of the interagency group under the Farm Bill

Going Soon for OMB Review
- Proposed Rule: Plant-Incorporated Protectants (PIP); to streamline review of certain plants modified in limited ways to carry additional pesticidal properties (more below)
- Final Rule: Confidential Business Information (CBI) Review

First Registrations for Candida auris (*C. auris*) Pathogen
OCSPP plans in January to announce availability of the first 10 products registered for use against *C. auris*, a fungal pathogen posing a global health threat. It can cause serious and sometimes fatal fungal infections, especially in hospitalized patients, and can be resistant to antifungal drugs. OCSPP is coordinating with CDC.

Upcoming Major Decisions and Events

Plant-Incorporated Protectant (PIP) Rule
OPP plans in early January to propose to exempt from FIFRA registration requirements and FFDCA tolerance requirements certain PIP products, pursuant to the President's Executive Order on biotechnology.

Isoxaflutole Proposed Registration
In early January, OPP will publish for a 30-day comment period the proposed decision to register a new use for the herbicide isoxaflutole on soybeans genetically engineered to resist isoxaflutole, providing a new tool to control weeds that have become resistant to other herbicides.

Chlorine Gas Proposed Interim Decision
OPP plans in mid-January to publish for public comment the Proposed Interim Decision for the registration review of chlorine gas, which is used as a disinfectant and sanitizer in commercial and industrial cooling towers, municipal water supplies, and treatment plants.

Glyphosate & Neonicotinoids
OPP plans in mid-January to publish an interim decision for the registration review of glyphosate and a preliminary interim decision (PID) for neonicotinoids. For glyphosate, there are no risks of concern for human health. OCSPP, however, identified potential risks of concern for birds, mammals, and non-target plants. The neonicotinoids PID will be accompanied by the most comprehensive pollinator assessment that EPA has conducted to date, because these insecticides can adversely impact hives. OCSPP and OPA are developing communication materials.

Selected One-Month Look-Ahead

- Notice of Availability: Release TSCA New Chemicals Working Approach for comment
- Late January: Release draft Trichloroethylene (TCE) and Carbon Tetrachloride risk evaluations
- Late January: Release TRI National Analysis

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Office of the Chief Financial Officer

Hot Topics

EPA Full Year Appropriation
On December 17, the House of Representatives passed by a vote of 297 Y /120 N "H.R. 1865, FY 2020 Further Consolidated Appropriations Act." EPA's full year appropriation is included in Division D, Title II of the bill, and funds EPA at $9.1 billion, an increase of $208 million above the FY 2019 Enacted post-rescission level. The Senate passed the bill December 19 by a vote of 71Y/ 23N. The President has indicated he would sign the bill into law. Once enacted, the agency's detailed OMB-approved operating plan is due to Congress by February 10, 2020. The Acting CFO issued guidance to the agency's AAs and DAAs and other senior policy officials regarding final FY 2021 President's Budget decisions.

Upcoming Major Decisions and Events

FY 2019 Annual Performance Report
On December 20, agency comments are due to OCFO on the draft FY 2019 Annual Performance Report, including draft targets for FY 2021 annual performance goals. OCFO will provide the FY 2019 APR to OMB for review January 13-17, 2020 for issuance as part of the FY 2021 Congressional Justification on February 3, 2020.

Upgrade to Compass
The Acting Chief Financial Officer will issue a memorandum announcing an upgrade to the agency accounting system, Compass, that will occur in mid-February. This upgrade will move the current Compass Financial System to a newer version, as the vendor will no longer support the existing version. The upgrade will impact the availability of Compass and each system that depends on Compass data. The new version will allow EPA to continue existing business processes and to take advantage of new software enhancements and added functionality that was designed and built for federal agencies. Current customized components that improve system controls and user experience will be included.

GAO and OIG Audits and Activities

The following tables summarize new agency OIG or GAO audits and other related activities from December 9 through December 13.

OIG Audits – Week Ending 12/13/2019					
Audit #	**Title**	**Status**	**Office**	**Date**	**Next Steps/Comments**
No new significant OIG agency audits or activities to report since last week.					

GAO Audits – Week Ending 12/13/2019				
Status Type	Title	Office	Engagement No.	Next Steps/Comments
Entrance Conference	Chemical Regulations Programs & Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Standards	OLEM/ORCR	103866 & 103806	Entrance conference scheduled - December 19th

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Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations

Hot Topics

Nothing to report this week.

Upcoming Major Decisions and Events

Dec 16 (tent.)	Release of cyanotoxins Technical Support Document w/water implementation materials
Jan. (tent.)	LGAC's Water Workgroup plans to meet to discuss follow up on PFAS and to begin to organize a workplan for the 2020 agenda and water priorities for the LGAC.
Jan. TBD (tent.)	Notification on WIIN grants to reduce lead in drinking water w/OW
January 22-24	US Conference of Mayors will host its 88th Annual Winter Meeting in Washington, D.C.
January 22-24	Mayor Bryan K. Barnett (Rochester Hills, MI) will preside as over 200 member mayors convene for a number of Best Practice Forums, Task Force meetings and Plenary sessions.

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Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance

Hot Topics

Existing Owner CAA Audit Program for Oil and Natural Gas Exploration and Production Facilities
On December 19, OECA temporarily expanded its voluntary self-audit and disclosure program for upstream oil and natural gas facilities to existing owners for 12 months. Many of these facilities are in areas that do not meet one of EPA's national ambient air quality standards or are at risk of not meeting one of these standards and have demonstrated widespread noncompliance. The self-audit program is designed to accelerate a return to compliance, improving air quality in surrounding communities. A key component of the program requires companies to assess storage tank battery vapor control system design as part of the audit process. In developing this program, OECA sought feedback from states, tribes, the regulated community, environmental NGOs, and other stakeholders.

Fishing Vessel Owner and Operator Plead Guilty and Fined $1 Million for Discharging Oily Waste into the Coastal Waters of the United States
On December 16, Sea Harvest Inc. and Fishing Vessel Enterprises Inc. pleaded guilty in the District of Massachusetts to violating the Clean Water Act for both knowing and negligent discharges of oily bilge water from the vessels' engine rooms. The companies were sentenced to pay a $1 million criminal fine and serve a five-year term of probation. As a special condition of probation, the companies will be required to implement a robust environmental compliance plan at their own expense that will cover 36 commercial fishing vessels that are owned or operated by the defendants. From at least early 2017 until late 2018, fishing vessels owned and operated by the defendants illegally discharged oily bilge waste into the sea including through New Bedford Harbor. New Bedford Harbor, a busy commercial seaport, works to support its surrounding communities as it did through the whaling and industrial times.

Upcoming Major Decisions and Events

Civil Monetary Penalty Adjustment Rule
In early January, OECA anticipates publication in the Federal Register of the 2020 Civil Monetary Penalty Adjustment Rule to adjust the statutory civil penalties under the various environmental laws as required by the Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act Improvements Act.

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Office of General Counsel

Hot Topics

Center for Biological Diversity v. Wheeler, No. 19-02462 (N.D. Cal. Dec. 11,)
New Decision: This mandatory duty lawsuit addresses EPA's obligation to determine whether certain areas designated moderate nonattainment for the 2008 ozone NAAQS had attained that standard by the applicable attainment date. Prior to the decision, EPA finalized attainment determinations for most areas, and the only remaining claim before the court related to the Imperial County, CA area, for which EPA had proposed action. The court ordered EPA to finalize that action by February 13, 2020, and to transmit it for publication within 15 business days. This was a month earlier than EPA's requested deadline, but the court found that EPA had not shown that it was impossible to meet such a deadline.

American Waterways Operators v. Wheeler, No 18-02933 (D.D.C. Dec. 13,)
New Decision: The Court denied EPA's motion for a voluntary remand without vacatur to consider pump out facilities supporting a "no-discharge zone" for sewage in Puget Sound. The State of Washington determined that the Puget Sound required greater protections than what EPA's vessel discharge standards provide, and in 2016, it petitioned EPA for a determination that adequate pump-out facilities were reasonably available. EPA issued a determination in February 2017 that adequate pump-out facilities were reasonably available, giving the State of Washington the green light to finalize its proposed designation and take the steps it deems appropriate to implement and enforce the discharge prohibition. In making its "reasonably available" finding, EPA rejected commenters' arguments that it should take into account compliance costs for vessels, reasoning that "neither the Clean Water Act nor EPA's implementing regulations contemplate or require that EPA consider" such costs. The Court directed the parties to propose a schedule for briefing summary judgment by December 20.

Cape Fear River Watch, et al. v. EPA, No. 19-2450 (4th Cir. filed Dec. 18)
New Litigation: On December 18, a group of ten environmental non-governmental organizations filed a petition for review in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit concerning EPA's determination that revision of the Clean Water Act effluent limitation guidelines and standards applicable to the Meat and Poultry Products industry is not appropriate at this time. The petition for review follows a July 2 notice of intent to sue alleging that the Agency had failed to meet its duty under CWA Section 304(b), 33 U.S.C. s. 1314(b), to review and, "at least annually thereafter, revise, if appropriate," the effluent limitation guidelines for the Meat and Poultry Products industry, as well as failed to meet its duty under section 304(b), 33 U.S.C. s. 1314(g), to review annually and, "if appropriate, revise" the pretreatment standard guidelines for the industry.

New NOI: On December 6, Our Children's Earth Foundation sent a notice of intent to sue (NOI) under the Clean Air Act. The NOI alleges that EPA has failed to take final action on 88 individually listed SIP submittals from California.

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Office of International and Tribal Affairs

Hot Topics

Transboundary Mining
EPA (OITA, R8, R10) and the State Department convened a call with Environment Climate Change Canada (ECCC) and Global Affairs Canada (GAC) to convey our continued concern with impacts to U.S. waters from the Elk Valley mines in British Columbia (BC) and that U.S. stakeholders are not being included in provincial decision-making processes directly affecting U.S. waters. EPA also identified the lack of engagement opportunities for U.S. tribes and federal agencies as particularly concerning. In particular, EPA conveyed our concerns that the provincial environmental assessment and permitting processes in Canada have not recognized and included impacts to U.S. waters, and do not require polluters to monitor, control or report on those impacts. ECCC provided an overview of its current water quality monitoring activities which it conducts with BC in the Kootenai Basin; and indicated that while BC is responsible for managing environmental permitting and stakeholder engagement in its territory, various federal legislation, such as the Fisheries Act, require controlling water pollution across all of Canada. The federal agencies committed to continued information sharing and collaboration on these issues, including notification of projects with potential transboundary impacts.

India Water Financing
India's Water Ministry met with the U.S. Embassy and requested USG technical assistance to address India's water management challenges. India struggles with a myriad of water-related challenges including water supply, sanitation, and effective infrastructure financing. The State Department is forming a USG inter-agency task force focused on India's water challenges, and has asked USG agencies, including EPA, for assistance. This may present an opportunity to share EPA's water finance programs in support of the Administrator's vision for expanding these programs internationally and OITA is following up with the State Department.

Upcoming Major Decisions and Events
Nothing to report this week.

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Office of the Land and Emergency Management

Hot Topics

Coal Combustion Residuals (CCR)

a. CCR Phase 2 proposed rule (package 1) – On October 15, the public comment period ended; OLEM is reviewing the comments.
b. CCR permitting NPRM (package 3) – This was signed and announced on December 19.
c. CCR litigation packages (package 2, parts A and B) – On December 2, the Part A NPRM package was published in the FR. The 60-day public comment period ends on January 31, 2020. OLEM, in coordination with the Office of Water, denied a request to extend the comment period to 120 days for the CCR Part A and ELG rules. Part B is with OP for OMB review.
d. The final decision package for the Georgia CCR permitting program was signed by the Administrator on December 16 and announced with the CCR permitting NPRM.

Clean Air Act 112(r) Risk Management Program (RMP)

We anticipate the final rule to publish in the FR with immediate effectiveness on December 19.

Ongoing Major Superfund NPL Sites

We are working with R1 on the Housatonic River; R2 on Woodbrook Road and Rolling Knolls; R4 on Oak Ridge and Birmingham 35th Ave.; R8 on Anaconda Smelter; and R10 on Portland Harbor, Quendall Terminal, and Bradford Island.

CERCLA 108(b) Financial Assurance (next three sectors)

On December 4, the Industry 2 (Petroleum and Coal) rule package was signed by the court-ordered deadline. We anticipate publication in the FR by December 23. OLEM is working with OMB to address comments on the Industry 3 (Chemical Manufacturing) NPRM package. We anticipate OMB concluding its review soon.

PFAS

- PFOA and PFOS contaminated groundwater guidance. OMB concluded its review on December 19. EPA plans to announce it the same day.
- Designation of PFOA/PFOS as CERCLA Hazardous Substances NPRM. The rule package was submitted to the Office of Policy on September 20 for OMB review.

Upcoming Major Decisions and Events

Monthly Business Review

On December 19, OLEM will hold its monthly business review meeting.

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Office of Mission Support

Hot Topics

Grosse Ile Office Closure Update
GSA posted a "Notice of Excess Property" to their website on December 11. The notice to claim the excess property from Grosse Ile is open for transfer to other federal agencies for 30 calendar days. If another federal agency is not interested in acquiring the excess property, the surplus is then advertised to state/local governments. Afterwards, the excess property is advertised for public sale. Once GSA surpluses the facility and turns it over to a new customer, the property will be considered fully released (estimated by spring 2020).

Change to Bicycle Commuting Reimbursements
In December 12, OMS briefed the unions on a change related to the *Tax Cuts and Jobs Act* signed into law on December 22, 2017. The Act amended the tax code and removed bicycle commuting reimbursement from the eligible qualified transportation fringe benefits that are excluded from taxable income for the period January 1, 2018, through January 1, 2026. OMS has been working closely with programs and regions to identify the impacted employees and is working with IBC and the IRS to minimize the disruption to employees.

Spring 2020 President's Management Council Interagency Rotations Program Announced
The [HYPERLINK "https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/training-and-development/leadership-development/" \l "url=PMC-Interagency-Rotation-Prgm"] provides a collaborative, cross-agency opportunity to enhance leadership competencies through developmental opportunities and a six-month rotational assignment outside a participant's current agency. The cohort is limited to HQ participants with rotations located in the DC commuting area. Future cohorts will include regions to create opportunities nationwide. Supervisors interested in hosting a participant were asked to submit a Rotation Experience Description Form to OHR by December 18 and will have the opportunity to interview potential participants. Applications for PMC participation also closed on December 18. The cohort will be announced in early 2020, with spring rotations beginning in April.

Executive Resources/Performance Review Board Update
The PRB continues to review performance plans for recommendations/approval. Anticipated timeline for AO approval of proposed ratings and bonuses is January 15, 2020. Executive Order on SES pay levels has not been signed as of December 18.

Upcoming Major Decisions and Events

National Information Technology/Information Management Conference – January 2020
The National IT/IM Meeting will be held January 7-9, 2020, at EPA's facility in Research Triangle Park, NC. R1 and OMS are partnering to host the conference for the IT/IM community. Attendees range from Senior Information Officials to Regional Information Resources Management Branch Chiefs and Headquarters Program Office Information Management Officials. The focus is to explore past successes and lessons learned, examine current activities and develop strategic plans for managing IT/IM across the Agency. OMS DAA-EI and CIO Vaughn Noga is championing this event. PDAA Donna Vizian and DAA-ARM Wesley Carpenter will attend and participate in a panel discussion.

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Office of Research and Development

Hot Topics

NAMs Workshop
ORD was pleased to have co-hosted the First Annual Conference on the State of the Science on Development and Use of New Approach Methods (NAMs) for Chemical Safety Testing with the Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention (OCSPP). This conference is one of EPA's commitments under the [HYPERLINK "https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2019-09/documents/image2019-09-09-231249.pdf"] memorandum calling for the agency to reduce its use of mammal studies.

PCB Protocol Release
The Systematic Review Protocol for the IRIS PCB assessment is posting December 19 to begin the 30-day public comment.

Escambia County, Florida Sampling
During the week of December 1, the Sediment Profile Imaging (SPI) Team from ORD's Gulf Ecosystem Measurement and Modeling Division worked with Escambia County, Florida's Water Quality and Land Management Division. The team deployed an SPI camera system in Bayou Chico, FL. The SPI system is a rapid sampling technology that captures cross-section images of the sediment–water interface and subsurface features. These images can be used to measure the biological, chemical, and physical character of sediments. The team visited more than 30 stations in the bayou during the three-day survey. The goals of this work are to test recent modifications to help sample in soft sediments and evaluate sediment quality in the bayou in advance of an upcoming sediment remediation project to be led by Escambia County. Bayou Chico is located in the Pensacola Bay Watershed.

Upcoming Major Decisions and Events

NCSE 2020 Annual Conference
On January 6-9, ORD will sponsor and participate in the National Council for Science and the Environment (NCSE) 2020 Annual Conference. NCSE 2020 will explore the various ways that science serves and contributes to the decision-making process, highlighting cases in which science has helped improve environmental decisions, as well as examples in which a lack of science has compromised the efficacy of decisions and policies. The annual conference brings together scientists, decision-makers, industry leaders, and subject-matter experts to effectively bridge the cultures of science and policymaking toward a more resilient and sustainable future and societal well-being.

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Office of Water

Hot Topics

New PFAS Drinking Water Method
This week, EPA announced a new validated method for testing per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in drinking water. EPA's new validated [HYPERLINK "https://www.epa.gov/dwanalyticalmethods/analytical-methods-developed-epa-analysis-unregulated-contaminants"] focuses on "short chain" PFAS, those PFAS with carbon chain lengths of four to 12. Using the combination of EPA's new validated PFAS Method 533 with existing Method 537.1, government and private laboratories can now effectively measure 29 PFAS in drinking water.

Lead and Copper Rule Revisions - Comment Period Extension
In response to several stakeholder requests, EPA is extending the comment period an additional 30 days to February 12, 2020. EPA published in the Federal Register a proposed rule on November 13, 2019, pertaining to the National Primary Drinking Water Regulation (NPDWR) for lead and copper under the authority of the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) and requested comments by January 13, 2020.

Proposed Multi-Sector General Permit
The week of January 6, 2020, the EPA regions will propose the 2020 reissuance of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Multi-Sector General Permit (MSGP), which covers eligible stormwater discharges associated with industrial activity for 29 sectors located in areas where the EPA is the permitting authority. This permit will replace the 2015 MSGP which expires on June 4, 2020. A settlement agreement on the 2015 MSGP specified potential revisions to the permit to be proposed or considered in the next issuance. The EPA requested input from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine's (NAS) National Research Council (NRC) on some of these potential revisions and will consider the results of their study in the issuance of the 2020 MSGP.

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