WEEKLY REPORT

July 15, 2021

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CABINET SECRETARY

FROM: DAN UTECH, 202-941-1114,
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)

SUBJECT: EPA Weekly Report | Week Ending July 15, 2021

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN (ARP) / AMERICAN JOBS PLAN (AJP) / ECONOMY

- **Past Week Accomplishments and Setbacks/Obstacles:**
  - **Coordination on Safe and Healthy School Planning:** The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) met with California's Bay Area Air Quality Management District on July 6th and the California Air Resources Board on July 12th to discuss funding provided through the American Rescue Plan that EPA will be using to develop a framework for identifying neighborhoods where school infrastructure upgrades could also allow the buildings to serve as air quality and heat emergency shelters in communities with vulnerable populations. The Bay Area Air District is tasked with regulating stationary sources of air pollution in the nine counties that surround San Francisco Bay: Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, southwestern Solano, and southern Sonoma counties.

COVID-19

- N/A

CLIMATE

- **Significant activity for consideration to raise to the attention of POTUS:**

- On July 22nd-23rd, Administrator Regan will participate in the G20 Ministerial Meeting on Environment, Climate and Energy in Naples, Italy. In addition to participating in the meeting, he will hold bilateral meetings and on July 23rd participate in an engagement event in a low-income neighborhood benefiting from a solar installation and environmental education program.

- **Past Week Accomplishments and Setbacks/Obstacles:**
  - **American Petroleum Institute:** On July 12th, Administrator Regan met with American Petroleum Institute's (API) Executive Committee, the oil and natural gas industry's trade association. They discussed methane regulations and other administration climate action priorities.
  - **Trucking & Engine Manufacturers Association:** On July 12th, Administrator Regan made an introductory call to Jed Mandel, President of the Truck and Engine Manufacturers Association, ahead of upcoming regulation announcements of heavy-duty vehicles.
  - **UN Climate Action Team Meeting**: On July 13th, EPA participated in a meeting with the UN Special Advisor and Assistant-Secretary General for Climate Action, Selwin Hart, and the UN Climate Action Team. Topics discussed included the methane/global methane initiative, transportation emissions, decarbonization of the power section and Just Transition. Just Transition is a framework developed by the trade union movement to encompass a range of social interventions needed to secure workers' rights and livelihoods when economies are shifting to sustainable production, primarily combating climate change and protecting biodiversity.
  - **Israeli Special Envoy for Climate Meeting**: On July 14th, EPA hosted a discussion with Israeli Special Envoy for Climate Change and Sustainability, Gideon Behar. The purpose of this visit was to discuss areas for bilateral and regional collaboration on climate change.
  - **Presentation to Portland Climate Change Team:** EPA presented its work on 'Extreme Heat & Wildfire Smoke: Reducing Risks to Public Health' on July 15th to the City of Portland Climate Change Team, which is developing a plan to improve heat action planning and smoke mitigation measures.

- **Climate & Equity Research Input Listening Sessions:** EPA hosted a series of listening sessions with tribal, state, and local partners focused on soliciting input on climate and equity-related research issues. 26 tribes and 36 states provided remarks on a range of topics including climate change impacts to water quality and resources, impacts to air quality, adapting infrastructure to a changing climate, predicting and preparing for natural disasters, extreme heat and related illnesses, need for projections of climate change induced population migration, impacts on rural populations including private wells and septic systems, understanding life cycles of materials used in renewable energy, increase in vector-borne diseases, need for capacity building. EPA will be offering a webinar later this year to summarize lessons learned and how the input will inform fiscal years 2023-2026 research needed to address climate change and related disproportionate effects on frontline, overburdened, and/or underserved communities.
- **EPA's Safer Choice Program Highlighted in Sustainable Shopping Initiative:** On July 13th, Amazon's Climate Pledge Friendly initiative announced that it will now include cleaning and other products certified by the EPA's Safer Choice program. Safer Choice is now one of 30 sustainability certifications highlighted under Amazon's Climate Pledge Friendly initiative which helps customers shop for more than 75,000 products through the company's online store. Highlighting Safer Choice-certified products makes it easier for consumers to locate products that contain safer chemical ingredients without sacrificing quality or performance.

EQUITY FOR UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

- **Past Week Accomplishments and Setbacks/Obstacles:**
  - **Rev. Al Sharpton:** On June 13th, Administrator Regan made an introductory call to Rev. Al Sharpton to discuss the ways the two can work together to advance Environmental Justice (EJ) and other shared priorities.

- **Next Week – Upcoming Events / Tasks / Developments:**

- **NEPA Webinar for Tribal Community:** EPA will be presenting a webinar to Tribes on July 21st, providing an overview of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)—the foundational federal environmental law enacted in 1969, and will include a presentation on a tribe's experience serving as a Cooperating Agency for a NEPA review. This is the first webinar in a three-part series and is part of the agency's ongoing Environmental Justice Webinar Series for Tribes and Indigenous Peoples.

SIGNIFICANT EXECUTIVE ORDER (EO) & AGENCY ACTIVITY

- **Past Week Accomplishments and Setbacks/Obstacles:**
  - **EPA Awards $6 Million to the University of California, Davis to Support Pesticide Safety Outreach:** On July 12th, EPA selected the Regents of the University of California, Davis (UC Davis) to receive a total of $6 million over a five-year period to develop materials and projects that promote safe pesticide use. Through this cooperative agreement, UC Davis will establish the Pesticide Educational Resources Collaborative (PERC) 2.0, the second phase of the currently successful PERC program. With the inception of PERC 2.0, UC Davis, in conjunction with EPA, will continue its mission of at providing resources that help protect those who work with and around pesticides, including agricultural workers, pesticide handlers, pesticide applicators, and their communities, as well as support employer compliance and encourage others to implement activities and programs with the same objectives.
  - **Cybersecurity Ransomware Attacks against Water Systems:** Over the last two weeks, the water sector has experienced three known ransomware attacks which are notable in that each attack compromised the operational function of the targeted utility.
    - On June 29th, a ransomware attack against a small water system in Pennsylvania—roughly 50 miles outside of Philadelphia—deprived the system of access to key files for a supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) system operating its well. The water system was able to turn off the SCADA system and operate the well manually – manual operation being a basic cybersecurity practice

recommended by EPA's Office of Water (OW). The SCADA system is now back online and normal operations have resumed.

- On July 2nd, an operator at a small water system in Ohio noticed that an unidentified actor had gained access to the SCADA program controlling the city's water pumps. Soon thereafter, ransomware was uploaded into a server responsible for remote monitoring of the plant's operations. Although the breach did not impact the utility's ability to treat water, the SCADA system could only be accessed onsite, requiring employees to be on 24 hour shifts to monitor the water plant.
- On July 6th, a ransomware attack against a water system in northern Maine serving a small community and an Air Force base disabled the alarms for two of the three raw water pumps necessitating increased staffing to operate the plant in manual mode. EPA's OW's cybersecurity team is working closely with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to monitor incidents in the water sector. The compromised computer was identified and disconnected from both the internet and the utility's network and is in the possession of the Department of Homeland Security for forensic analysis. The Plant is currently rebuilding the workstation with a new hard drive to restore the infected system's functionality. EPA continues to advance regulatory and statutory actions that will greatly mitigate the risks of ransomware and other types of cyberattacks in this critical consumer public sector.

- **Gender Equality Committee:** On July 6th, EPA voted to support a French proposal to develop a new International Organization for Standardization (ISO) standard on gender equality. EPA also sent the French proposal and information about the White House Gender Policy Council and related Executive Orders to the Interagency Committee on Standards Policy (ICSP, Standards Executives from Federal agencies).
- **Farm Bureau Council of Presidents:** On July 13th, Administrator Regan addressed the American Farm Bureau

Federation's (AFBF) Council of Presidents annual meeting, where he delivered remarks to leadership of all 50 state farm bureaus and participated in a fireside chat with AFBF President Zippy Duvall. During the discussion, Administrator Regan highlighted his commitment to engaging the agriculture community.

- **Colombia Meeting:** On July 15th, EPA Deputy Administrator McCabe and Acting Assistant Administrator for Tribal and International Affairs Jane Nishida hosted a discussion with Colombia's Chief of Staff to the President Maria Paula Correa and Colombian Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development Carlos Eduardo Correa around bilateral collaboration in the areas of climate change, environmental education, air quality, and hazardous waste.

- **Next Week – Upcoming Events / Tasks / Developments:**
  - **EPA Updating the AirNow Fire & Smoke Map Info During Wildfires:** On July 16th, EPA and the U.S. Forest Service plan to announce updates to the AirNow and Fire & Smoke Map to give users more information on how air quality changes during wildfires. The Fire & Smoke map will now be more mobile-friendly and will soon be available in the AirNow app. AirNow reports air quality using the official U.S. Air Quality Index (AQI), a color-coded index designed to communicate whether air quality is healthy or unhealthy. AirNow is a partnership of the EPA, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), National Park Service, NASA, Centers for Disease Control, and tribal, state, and local air quality agencies.
  - **PFAS Low Volume Exemptions Stewardship Program**: EPA will announce a program to work cooperatively with companies to voluntarily withdraw all previously granted low volume exemptions (LVEs) for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). PFAS are a group of man-made chemicals that have been manufactured and used in a variety of industries around the globe, including in the United States since the 1940s. Chemicals granted LVEs are exempt from full premanufacture notice review. EPA's goal is to encourage the withdrawal of as many of the remaining PFAS LVEs as possible by leveraging partnerships with trade associations, non-governmental

organizations, and direct outreach to companies to encourage voluntary withdrawal of the LVEs. By withdrawing their LVEs, companies will certify that they will no longer manufacture or import the covered PFAS.

- **EPA Announcing U.S. and Canada Signing New CRADA on ENERGY STAR Building Energy Efficiency & Emissions:** On July 16th, EPA plans to issue a press release to announce the signing of a new Cooperative Research and Development Agreement (CRADA) with Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) to continue collaborating on new enhancements to EPA's ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager® tool. This tool is a free, online energy, water, waste, and emissions measurement and tracking platform for commercial, institutional, and multifamily buildings.

APPENDIX

- **Week ahead messaging:**
  - Bipartisan Infrastructure Framework – Water infrastructure, climate resilience and the ways the Bipartisan Infrastructure Framework benefits communities.
  - America is Back – EPA engagement at the G20 in Italy demonstrates the Biden Administration commitment to the global climate and environment conversation.
  - Environmental Justice – EPA is pursuing environmental justice for underserved communities at home and carrying a message of equity abroad.

- **Speeches**
  - **Administrator Regan to Deliver Virtual Keynote Remarks on Climate Change at ECOS Summer Meeting:** On Wednesday, July 14th, EPA Administrator Michael S. Regan delivered a virtual keynote remarks at the annual Environmental Council of the States (ECOS) summer meeting, its first ever dedicated to discussions on climate change. Administrator Regan outlined the multiple ways that EPA is tackling climate change and advancing environmental justice and touched on the Bipartisan Infrastructure Framework. He also discussed EPA's recommitment to robust state and federal partnerships to address shared climate and other environmental challenges.

- **Travel:**
  - On July 22d-23rd, Administrator Regan will participate in the G20 Ministerial Meeting on Environment, Climate and Energy in Naples, Italy. In addition to participating in the meeting, he will hold bilateral meetings and on July 23rd participate in an engagement event in a low-income neighborhood benefiting from a solar installation and environmental education program.

- **Media:**
  - Administrator Regan engaged with media in Wisconsin and Michigan from July 6th–8th in a trip that emphasized the Bipartisan Infrastructure Framework. The [HYPERLINK "https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/icymi-administrator-regan-visits-wisconsin-and-michigan-highlighting-water"] covered water infrastructure, environmental justice and clean transportation issues and included press events and interviews in Milwaukee, Flint, Dearborn, and Detroit with participation from mayors and Members of Congress throughout.
  - Administrator Regan spoke with [HYPERLINK "https://www.npr.org/2021/07/14/1015895986/senate-budget-has-funds-to-ensure-infrastructure-works-as-the-climate-changes"] for a segment that aired on July 14th about the Bipartisan Infrastructure Framework and EPA priorities.
  - On July 15th, Administrator Regan participated in interviews with coalitions and local media about the Bipartisan Infrastructure Framework.
  - On July 16th, EPA and the U.S. Forest Service will issue a press release announcing improvements to the AirNow Fire and Smoke Map, including making it more mobile-friendly. The map will be added to the AirNow app soon. This follows on Administrator Regan's participation in the President's meeting on wildfires and press briefing at the White House.

- **Principal level meetings or calls with Governors, Mayors, or other elected officials of note:**
  - July 14th – Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda Solis spoke with Administrator Regan via video call to discuss environmental justice issues related to the Exide Battery

Recycling Facility and the Montrose Chemical Corp. Superfund sites and related DDT disposal in the Pacific Ocean.
  - July 14th – Environmental Council of the States (ECOS) hosted their Summer State Environmental Protection Meeting where Administrator Regan delivered a virtual keynote address on EPA climate change activities.

- **Noteworthy public engagement:**
  - July 12th – Interstate Oil and Gas Compact Commission joined a roundtable with EPA to discuss upcoming proposed rules for the oil and natural gas industry.
  - July 15th – National Governors Association and Western Governors Association participated in a consultation with EPA's Office of Water on Clean Water Act Section 401.
  - July 13th – Administrator Regan addressed the American Farm Bureau Federation's (AFBF) Council of Presidents annual meeting, where he delivered remarks to leadership of all 50 state farm bureaus and participated in a fireside chat with AFBF President Zippy Duvall.
  - July 13th – EPA's Office of Public Engagement and Environmental Education convened a meeting with Farm Bureau staff from Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, Wisconsin, Michigan, Missouri, and Ohio to speak with EPA senior staff on ways to collaborate on ethanol and the renewable fuel standard, Waters of the United States regulation, as well as dicamba and other pesticide decisions.
  - July 14th – Administrator Regan delivered pre-recorded remarks to the Environmental Working Group's first national PFAS Conference, which focused on the impact that per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), better known as toxic "forever" chemicals, have on human health, and what is being done to address the harms PFAS cause to human health and the environment.
  - July 13th – Administrator Regan made an introductory call to Rev. Al Sharpton to discuss the ways the two can work together to advance environmental justice and other shared priorities.
  - July 19th – Administrator Regan will make an introductory call to Chris Wood, CEO of Trout Unlimited, to discuss water

priorities. Trout Unlimited has 340,000 members and supporters and are a key stakeholder around the Clean Water Act. This conversation will begin the discussion about how Trout Unlimited will engage around upcoming Waters of the United States rulemakings, as well as on other issues.

- **Principal level meetings or calls with Members of Congress:**
  - July 13th – Rep. Paul Tonko (D-NY) video call with Administrator Regan.
  - July 14th – Breakfast with Sen. Richard Burr (R-NC)
  - July 15th – Breakfast with Sen. Tom Carper (D-DE)

- **Noteworthy inquiries from Congressional committees or Members of Congress; scheduled testimony by Secretary or Deputy Secretary:**
  - June 28th – Letter from Rep. Luetkemeyer (R-MO) Ranking Member Small Business Committee and 11 other members concerned about WOTUS rule review and negative impact on small business.
  - July 1st – letter from Rep. Bobby Scott (D-VA) and 17 Chesapeake Bay region members to EPA and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers supporting replacing the last administration's WOTUS rule
  - July 12th – Letter from Rep. Newhouse (R-WA) and 59 Western Caucus members letter concerned about revisiting WOTUS rule