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H₂O LINE NEWSLETTER

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MEETING NOTICE

Please join us on **Tuesday, January 30, 2024** for the next Environmental Compliance meeting. The meeting will be held from 9:30 – 10:30 am at the **Grand Prairie Main Library** located at **901 Conover Street**.

Mr. Jason Earll with OSHCON (Occupational Safety and Health Consultation Program) will discuss hazards in the workplace, where employers can find assistance, and updated OSHA standards. The OSHCON program is a free and confidential service available to private Texas employers through the Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation. OSHCON helps employers understand and comply with Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) health and safety requirements and teaches them how to maintain safe and healthy workplaces.

To register, or for more information, contact Eric Straw at (972) 237-8277 or estraw@gptx.org, or fax your registration form to (972) 237-8228.

EPA PROPOSES AMENDMENT TO STRENGTHEN 2020 TOXIC AIR POLLUTANTS REDUCTIONS AND PROTECT PUBLIC HEALTH

Toxic air emissions from industries remain a major problem for public health and the environment in the United States. Though the EPA has had rules on the books to combat this issue for decades, many businesses have found ways to skirt the rules. One method has been to reclassify a business from a “major source” to an “area source” and then increase hazardous air emissions. In light of this, the EPA has purposed strengthening a 2020 Clean Air Act rule that would seek to prevent industries from taking advantage of this loophole. If accepted, this enhanced rule would require businesses to sign on to a federally enforceable permit that would limit such increases of pollutants after reclassification. This is one of many methods the EPA, under the current administration, is hoping to curb harmful air pollutants, improve public health and prevent the emissions exacerbating the climate crisis.





Many businesses across the world are making sustainability a top priority. They have started to adopt sustainable practices to not only reduce their environmental footprint but to strengthen their sense of purpose as well as to save costs and increase revenue. The trends listed below will help businesses transform to create a more inclusive and resilient economy.

- their net-zero target, many businesses have started asking how their supply chains can go even further and become CO2 negative.
- 1. From net zero to climate-positive supply chains.** Many businesses have implemented net-zero sustainability targets which includes reducing Scope 3 emissions. Scope 3 emissions do not come from the operation itself but from their larger value chain. While considering how to meet their net-zero target, many businesses have started asking how their supply chains can go even further and become CO2 negative.
 - 2. Organization readiness for sustainable transformation.** Organization transformation and collaboration amongst organizations, corporations, and non-market players will be needed to gain funding for environmental needs. This includes practices like businesses adopting market-based approaches and governments creating stable policies.
 - 3. The next generation in family business will power data-driven sustainability.** The new generation of business owners are more environmentally conscious and focused on creating sustainable business practices. This includes improving the supply chain through technology. To accomplish reaching sustainability goals, a more data-driven approach is being taken.
 - 4. War and energy shortages accelerate adoption of energy efficiency and renewable energy.** Businesses have started to examine energy-saving measures to reduce costs and carbon emissions. This includes installing shut off lighting and equipment, replacing less efficient equipment, and renovating buildings to include newer temperature controls and better insulation. These practices will eventually lead to new types of energy and fuels.
 - 5. Accounting for nature and biodiversity in climate targets.** Businesses are encouraged to start conducting biodiversity assessments in their climate targets to help preserve biodiversity.
 - 6. Sharing emotions for healthy, sustainable high performance.** To create a place of inclusivity and productivity, business leaders are encouraged to implement an easy exercise. Employees write down things that are concerning them on a sticky note and place it on a wall. Then, they write down things that they can influence and achieve and place it on an opposite wall. This creates an environment where people can grow and thrive.
 - 7. Luxury developing sustainable supply chains.** Luxury industries like cars and fashion have had their sights set on sustainability for years now. Watches and jewelry have now entered the mix and have begun collaborating with other high fashion businesses. These luxury businesses will need to work together to find ways to create positive-impact business models that lowers their Scope 3 emissions.
 - 8. Board composition and responsibilities adapt to ESG purpose.** Boards should evaluate and understand their values regarding ESG and develop the board composition in that direction.
 - 9. Innovation, investment, and business transformation fuel climate hopes.** There are a few reasons to be optimistic for turning things around. New solutions are continuously sought after, investment in renewable energy is high, and companies are moving towards more sustainable operations.
 - 10. New regulations drive sustainability strategy.** Soon, all businesses will have adopted mandatory sustainability reporting standards. Businesses can view this as an opportunity to prioritize sustainability.
 - 11. Harnessing collaboration to enable the circular economy.** Collaboration is vital in transitioning to a circular economy. Doing so increases multi-stakeholder innovations which leads to progressing solutions adoption.
 - 12. AI: a friend and a foe for sustainability?** AI can be both good and bad. The bad is that it requires a ton of energy to cool the data centers that store and process large amounts of data. The good is that AI can assist in the conservation of natural resources through better reporting and prediction.
 - 13. Mind the ESG reporting trap! An opportunity lens on sustainability.** Instead of getting lost in ESG reporting, it is important to focus on how to seize the business opportunities that it can provide.

The Interior Department announced its decision to cancel oil and gas leases in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) that were granted to the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA) during the final days of the Trump administration. The leases were issued just before President Joe Biden’s inauguration, and this move aligns with Biden’s commitment to protecting the habitat for polar bears and caribou.

In addition to canceling the ANWR leases, the Interior Department revealed plans to safeguard 13 million acres in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska, with over 40% of the reserve being off-limits to new leasing. President Biden emphasized the responsibility to protect the Arctic region due to the accelerated impact of the climate crisis.

This decision is part of President Biden’s broader agenda to curb oil and gas activities on public lands as part of efforts to address climate change. The Interior Department cited a flawed environmental analysis as the basis for canceling the 2021 lease sale. Environmentalists and Alaska Indigenous groups have praised the move, but it faced criticism from Republican Senator Dan Sullivan, who expressed frustration over the Biden administration’s impact on Alaska’s economy and access to its lands.

Alaska’s oil production has declined over the past three decades, and the state currently produces less than 500,000 barrels per day, down from over 2 million barrels per day in 1988. This decision is seen as part of a larger effort by the Biden administration to balance environmental conservation with energy development on public lands.

MONITORING AND REPORTING STORMWATER DISCHARGES FROM INDUSTRIAL FACILITIES



Industrial facilities covered under the stormwater Multi-Sector General Permit (TXR050000) in Texas must monitor and report stormwater discharges to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ).

Reporting of analytical results for compliance must be submitted electronically in the NetDMR reporting system by March 31 following the calendar year in which the samples were collected. There are various discharge monitoring report forms that can be used that cover different sectors and types of pollutants for record-keeping. Paper DMRs can only be submitted to TCEQ if you have requested and obtained an electronic reporting waiver. Data collected is crucial for determining compliance with permit requirements, such as effluent limitations and benchmark monitoring. When submitting this data online, NetDMR accounts are per person, and there are specific roles like “Permittee” and “Data Provider” for reporting and signing DMRs.

Common issues that facilities might encounter when reporting are differentiating between benchmark and hazardous metals sampling and dealing with substantially similar outfalls. For further assistance TCEQ has more information and hosted a NetDMR MSGP webinar that you can watch on their website:

[Compliance Assistance Videos - Texas Commission on Environmental Quality - www.tceq.texas.gov](https://www.tceq.texas.gov)

22 STATES FIGHT 3M'S \$12.5B 'FOREVER CHEMICALS' SETTLEMENT



A bipartisan group of attorneys general (AGs) from 22 states, led by California AG Rob Bonta, is challenging a proposed \$12.5 billion settlement between 3M and public water utilities over PFAS contamination. The AGs filed a motion to intervene in the federal district court in South Carolina which argues that the proposed settlement is thus worth far less than the advertised \$10.5 billion to \$12.5 billion. They contend that the settlement's indemnity clause could unfairly shift billions in liability to numerous public drinking water providers, including those not involved in the lawsuit or unaware of PFAS in their systems.

The settlement would resolve numerous lawsuits against 3M for using PFAS, known as toxic "forever chemicals," in consumer products and firefighting foams. However, the AGs assert that the agreement undervalues the actual damages, potentially leaving communities vulnerable to future liabilities related to PFAS-related health issues, such as cancer, developmental defects, and liver damage. The AG coalition includes Texas among the 22 states challenging the settlement. This action highlights the AGs' commitment to holding PFAS manufacturers accountable for environmental and health impacts.



TEXAS TROUBLE



A metal component fabrication center in Harris County was assessed \$88,325 for allowing the unauthorized storage and/or disposal of industrial hazardous waste at an unauthorized facility, failing to conduct hazardous waste determinations and waste classifications at the point of generation, failing to obtain authorization prior to constructing or modifying a facility, and failing to clearly mark oil storage containers with the words "Used Oil."

A wastewater treatment facility in Cameron County was assessed \$16,250 for failing to collect and analyze effluent samples at the intervals specified in the permit.

A honey processing facility in Collin County was assessed \$2,438 for failing to prevent an unauthorized discharge of industrial waste into or adjacent to any water in the state.

A sludge transporter in Kendall County was assessed \$25,938 for failing to deposit wastes at a facility designated by or acceptable to the generator that has a permit to receive wastes and failing to prevent the storage of waste in a mobile closed container for more than four days.