



Advancing *Biosolids*
Environmental Management
Systems in Local **Communities**

NACWA WEF EPA

www.biosolids.org

Week of February 18, 2008 - No. 571



To: NBP Web Site Registrants and Visitors

**From: Sam Hadeed, NBP Office: 703-684-2418 or
shadeed@wef.org**

Subject: Weekly Biosolids Update from NBP

PA WEA and MABA to Co-Sponsor Workshop Introduction to NBP EMS for Biosolids at RBC Conference in Philly; Wyoming, MI Expected to OK Sludge Fee; Biosolids Workshop at University of Nebraska, Lincoln; Dozens in East Brunswick, PA Protest Sludge Lawsuit; EPA Seeks Public Comment on Possible Drinking Water Contaminants.

From **Gene DeMichele**, edemichele@wef.org. **PA WEA and MABA to Co-Sponsor Workshop Introduction to NBP EMS for Biosolids at RBC Conference in Philly.** A free workshop introducing an environmental management system (EMS) for biosolids will be offered to Pennsylvania and regional wastewater treatment agencies as well as biosolids preparers on March 29, 2008. The Marriott Philadelphia Downtown in Philadelphia will be the site of this National Biosolids Partnership (NBP) event. The occasion for the Saturday workshop is the start of the 22nd WEF Residuals and Biosolids Conference & Exhibition on Sunday, March 30.

The Pennsylvania Water Environment Association (PAWEA) and the Middle Atlantic Biosolids Association (MABA) are co-sponsors of the event along with the National Biosolids Partnership (NBP) located in Alexandria, Virginia. The objectives of the program are to expand the national EMS program (now with 100 participating organizations) by providing sufficient start-up information to assist regional agencies to establish environmental management systems based on the "blueprint documents" developed by the NBP. The introductory workshop will identify the components of the blueprint documents, with guidance on how to get started.

The Introductory Workshop will be followed by a three-workshop series through the balance of 2008 for those organizations serious about creating and demonstrating their own environmental management system. Registration is limited. For more information about the Introductory Workshop or the planned workshop series, contact Gene De Michele, edemichele@wef.org or call 703-684-2438.

From **Grand Rapids, MI Press, 2-18-08. Wyoming, MI Expected to OK Sludge Fee.** WYOMING -- An 8 percent hike in sludge disposal costs is expected in late 2009, but officials say the increase in rates to sewer users will be smaller. Financing for the final phase of a four-part, \$36 million construction partnership with Grand Rapids is expected to gain approval tonight from the Wyoming City Council. Wyoming will pay about one-third of the \$18.4 million cost to build a dewatering facility at the Grand Rapids sewage plant.

Storage tanks in Grand Rapids, a pump in Wyoming and pipelines between the two plants already are under construction. The purpose is to hedge against rising fuel costs and threats of tighter environmental regulations. "You can't have all your eggs in one basket," said Tom Kent, Wyoming's utility plant superintendent. "We need diversity in this program."

Wyoming now disposes of biosolids -- the sludge byproduct of the wastewater treatment process -- by spreading it on area farmland. But officials say the cost of diesel fuel is making that method more expensive. Also, the loss of local farmland is forcing the city to send sludge greater distances in what Kent called "a side effect of urban sprawl." "We're running out of land. We're trucking it farther and farther," Mayor Carol Sheets said. "(This biosolids plan) provides us a viable option."

The new pump and pipeline will let Wyoming send sludge from its plant to the new tanks in Grand Rapids. That will give the city more storage during the winter and provide the option of putting the sludge in a landfill, which is what Grand Rapids does. In late 2009, when construction is complete, Wyoming's cost of sludge processing will increase from the current \$255 per dry ton to an estimated \$275, Kent said. Quarterly sewer bills for the typical Wyoming user will rise about 54 cents, he said. That's much cheaper than the initial plan conceived by Wyoming and Grand Rapids in 2004, when they formed the Grand Valley Regional Biosolids Authority to create an environmentally friendly disposal process. An idea to make biosolids into marketable fertilizer pellets would have cost \$112 million, bumping the cost for Wyoming to about \$570 per dry ton.

The Grand Rapids City Commission is expected to approve financing Tuesday. The dewatering facility will improve upon an existing process that enables the sludge to be put in a landfill and used to create methane gas, said Eric DeLong, deputy city manager. Electricity production, composting and the marketable pellets are other renewable options that could be on the horizon. "It positions us for the future," DeLong said. The Grand Rapids plant serves about 300,000 people in the city and 14 surrounding municipalities. Wyoming's plant also serves Kentwood, Grandville, and Byron and Gaines townships.

[#Top of the Document](#)

From **University of Nebraska, Lincoln. Biosolids Workshop at University of Nebraska, Lincoln.** Given the high cost of N-fertilizers, consider biosolids as a way to reduce your out-of-pocket fertilizer costs. Using it will improve poor soil and increase yields. This material is high in organic matter and contains all the nutrients crops need to grow. Lincoln's biosolids is applied to row crops not consumed directly by humans. Field corn and soybeans are the most common crops fertilized by Lincoln's biosolids. Cooperators must be able to apply the materials in a timely way or hire someone to custom apply biosolids. To be considered for 2008 delivery, sign up for biosolids before March 15. Because of the high cost of N-fertilizer, there is more demand for biosolids than ever before. To learn more about the benefits of using biosolids, come to an educational workshop, Lincoln's Biosolids

Program, on Monday, March 3, 3:45–8:30 p.m. At this workshop, you will learn biosolids will: • reduce fertilizer costs and increase yields • improves soil tilth, especially on poor or eroded soil • add valuable organic matter to the soil. Attendees will also learn how wastewater is processed and made safe for application and how regulations determine application rates and locations where biosolids can be applied. We will travel to the Theresa Street Wastewater Facility for a tour of the facility and return to the extension center for an educational program. Please pre-register by Feb. 29 with Karen Wedding at 402-441-7180. If you have any additional questions about the biosolids program, call and ask for Barb Ogg or Dave Smith.

[#Top of the Document](#)



From **Pottsville, PA Republican Herald, 2-20-08. Dozens in East Brunswick, PA Protest Sludge Lawsuit.** Pottsville's Centre Street became a sludge battleground Tuesday night. About 50 East Brunswick Township residents and others rallied at 5 p.m., coinciding with Pennsylvania Attorney General Tom Corbett's arrival for a political fundraiser inside the Greystone restaurant.

PHOTO Annette Etchberger, left, and Regina Wiyda, both of East Brunswick Township, present a letter signed by township

citizens to Pennsylvania Attorney General Tom Corbett on Tuesday in front of the Greystone restaurant in Pottsville.

Corporations spreading sewage sludge on farmlands has some East Brunswick residents furious — and now they're gearing up to meet the attorney general in Commonwealth Court in April. "We're trying to remind the attorney general what country he's in," said Democrat Bill Mackey, township resident and 124th Legislative District candidate. "We're supporting the East Brunswick Township supervisors. They passed a law to protect their citizens."

After Corbett pulled up to Greystone in a black sport utility vehicle, two township residents presented him with a 203-signature letter accusing him of stripping the township of its right to self-govern. Corbett said his job is to simply enforce the state's laws. Passed by East Brunswick Township supervisors in 2006, the sludge ordinance challenges the rights of corporations to spread sewage sludge, called "biosolids" in the sewage treatment industry, and allows individuals to apply the materials only if they will pay for necessary environmental testing and take on all personal liability for environmental damage.

Residents cite health concerns and possible environmental effects as motivation for their opposition. "I live right down the road from a farm and I've had asthma attacks," Jane Shellhamer, 42, of New Ringgold, said. "I have a little one (child). They're (her children are) 16 and 3." The law, however, may be on Corbett's side. In 2005, the Pennsylvania General Assembly passed the Agriculture Community Rural Environment law, which restricted local governments' ability to control corporate farming activity. The ACRE law gave the state the authority to set standards on controversial issues like sludge.

"They (municipalities) cannot pass laws more strict than the state law," said Nils Frederiksen, the attorney general's spokesman. "The law is clear. You can't operate

illegally and then thumb your nose at the law. They're rallying to get more people to violate the law." Corbett defended his position to the residents before slipping into Greystone. "If every municipality were to pass different (farming) regulations, no one would be able to conduct business," Corbett said.

At the rally, residents didn't hide their disdain for Corbett. "A vote for Corbett is a vote for sludge," one sign read. "We live here. We decide," another stated. Another sign asked who would later be responsible for the township's sick children. Frederiksen said the attorney general's office tried unsuccessfully to negotiate with East Brunswick Township. After stalled talks, he said the office had no choice but to file a lawsuit against the township. Frederiksen said the case will be heard in April in Commonwealth Court. He also said if the court sides with the attorney general, the township sludge ordinance will immediately be struck down.

East Brunswick Township residents also provided The REPUBLICAN & Herald with letters addressed to state Sen. James J. Rhoades, R-29, and state Rep. David Argall, R-124. In the letters, residents "respectfully demand" the repeal of the ACRE law and control returned to local governments. Argall said he understands the township's concerns. "I opposed ACRE," Argall said. "The problem is it takes away the local government's options." Argall said as he understands the law, East Brunswick Township would be responsible for paying legal bills for the commonwealth if the township loses the case.

Champ Holman, Rhoades' chief of staff, said Rhoades has twice proposed legislation to ban sludge completely until concerns could be addressed and "we're sure" it isn't harmful. Holman said the legislation got stuck in committee. He also said Corbett was operating in line with the duty of his office. "Whether it's Tom Corbett or Mr. Smith, his job is to uphold the law," Holman said.

LETTER ADDRESSED TO ATTORNEY GENERAL TOM CORBETT

Signed by 203 East Brunswick Township Residents.

Attorney General Corbett,

We, the residents of East Brunswick Township, Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania are outraged that you have agreed to strip us of our right to local self-governance! You are taking directions from waste hauling corporations who have defined dumping sewage sludge in rural Pennsylvania — AGAINST the wishes of citizens — as a "normal agricultural operation." Protecting corporate commercial interests over the safety, health and welfare of families in rural Pennsylvania contradicts your promise as Attorney General of "Protecting Pennsylvania Families."

In your letter to East Brunswick Township wherein you notified our local officials of your intent to bring a lawsuit against this township, you stated that we "have no authority" to protect our community, our families, our environment and our quality of life. Your actions in this matter — STRIPPING our local government of the power to protect citizens and TAKING AWAY the rights of residents to live in a healthy environment — are unacceptable to the residents of East Brunswick.

We remind you of our RIGHTS and our AUTHORITY which are recognized by the

Pennsylvania Constitution, Article 1 Section II, "All power is inherent in the people, and all free governments are founded on their authority and instituted for their peace, safety and happiness."

Respectfully,
Residents of East Brunswick

[#Top of the Document](#)

From **Dave Ryan**, ryan.dave@epa.gov. ***EPA Seeks Public Comment on Possible Drinking Water Contaminants***. EPA announced on February 20 that it is asking for public comment on a list of 104 possible drinking water contaminants that may need to be regulated in the future to ensure the continued protection of drinking water. Under the Safe Drinking Water Act, EPA includes on the draft Contaminant Candidate List (CCL) currently unregulated contaminants that are known or anticipated to occur in public water systems and which may require regulation. This draft CCL, which is the third such listing, lists 93 chemical contaminants or groups and 11 microbes, and describes the process and basis for selecting these contaminants.

"EPA is casting a broader scientific net for potential regulation of chemicals and microbes in drinking water," said Assistant Administrator for Water Benjamin H. Grumbles. "EPA's proposed list of priority contaminants will advance sound science and public health by targeting research on certain chemicals and microbes and informing regulators on how best to reduce risk."

The CCL process was established by the 1996 Amendments to the Safe Drinking Water Act as a mechanism to determine if new regulations are needed to protect drinking water. Under this process EPA conducts extensive research into the occurrence and health effects of the listed contaminants before issuing new regulations or standards. In developing the draft CCL 3, the agency implemented a new approach for selecting contaminants which builds upon evaluations used for previous lists and is based on substantial expert input early in the process and recommendations from a larger number of different groups including stakeholders, the National Research Council and the National Drinking Water Advisory Council.

The draft list includes chemicals used in commerce, pesticides, biological toxins, disinfection byproducts, and waterborne pathogens. The agency evaluated approximately 7,500 chemicals and microbes and selected 104 candidates for the final draft list based on their potential to pose health risks through drinking water exposure. The comment period is open for 90 days beginning the day of publication in the Federal Register. For more information on the CCL 3, visit: <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/ccl/ccl3.html>.

[#Top of the Document](#)