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Latest Posts

02.01.2018 [EPA Asks States to the Take the Lead in Environmental Enforcement](#)

By Baerbel E. Schiller, Ryan Pulkrabek

Recently, EPA issued an Interim OECA Guidance on EPA and state roles on managing enforcement and compliance assistance. See, [Interim OECA Guidance on Enhancing Regional—State Planning and Communication on Compliance Assurance Work in Authorized States](#). While EPA is seeking to emphasize cooperative federalism in modifying the emphasis of the 1986 revised policy on state/EPA enforcement agreements, as provided in the first footnote of the Guidance, the policy issued on January 22, 2018, appears to make the states the primary enforcer of environmental laws and provides a secondary role for EPA in that regard.

02.05.2017 [EPA and OSHA Increase Civil Penalties – Days Before New Administration](#)

By Andrew C. Brought

In January 2017, both EPA and OSHA increased civil penalties for new enforcement cases. While the increases became effective just days before the new Administration took office, the increases are a result of Congressional action in 2015 to annually adjust civil penalties for inflation by January 15 of each new calendar year.

12.11.2016 [EPA Issues Final Hazardous Waste Generator Improvements Rule](#)

By Paul Jacobson, Baerbel E. Schiller

On November 28, 2016, EPA published the final version of the Hazardous Waste Generator Improvements Rule (the Rule) in the Federal Register. Promulgated under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), the Rule updates EPA's regulations governing generators of hazardous waste, most of which EPA promulgated in the 1980s. The Rule significantly revises the hazardous waste generator requirements.

09.18.2016 [Retail and Consumer Product Hazardous Waste – Update on Reverse Distribution and Aerosol Cans by EPA](#)

By Andrew C. Brought

On September 12, 2016, EPA issued its "Strategy for Addressing the Retail Sector under RCRA's Regulatory Framework." The strategy document sets forth three actions the agency is expected to finalize in the short-term to help ease the RCRA burden on managing retail and consumer products that may trigger RCRA hazardous waste characteristics or RCRA listings once a decision to discard is made.

08.21.2016 [Avoiding Cleanup Liability for Industrial and Commercial Properties Under New Kansas Law](#)

By Andrew C. Brought, James T. Price

Effective July 1, 2016, buyers of industrial and commercial properties in Kansas may qualify for a Certificate of Environmental Liability Release (CELR) under the state's new Contaminated Property Redevelopment Act. This liability release for pre-existing contamination is important for prospective purchasers of industrial and commercial properties by helping to facilitate those transactions and allow the buyer to avoid state cleanup responsibility. But not only buyers benefit, as sellers can also demonstrate a framework that allows the transaction to proceed and maximize the property value without the buyer or seller taking on unnecessary risk if the proper steps to obtain the CELR are followed.

04.07.2015 [EPA Revises its Supplemental Environmental Project – SEP Policy](#)

By Andrew C. Brought

On March 10, 2015, EPA issued a new revised 2015 Update to its Supplemental Environmental Project (SEP) Policy, thereby superseding prior SEP policies.

02.25.2015 [Next Generation Compliance—EPA Strategy to Delegate Enforcement to Third Parties?](#)

By Baerbel E. Schiller

In a recent January 2015 Memorandum to EPA's Regional Enforcement Managers from Cynthia Giles, EPA Assistant Administrator for Enforcement, EPA is touting its Next Generation Compliance strategy as "an integrated strategy" intended to "bring together the best thinking from inside and outside EPA."

01.19.2015 [A Sham, a Waste? EPA's New Recycling and Hazardous Waste Rules Finalized](#)

By Andrew C. Brought

Last week, on January 13, 2015, EPA issued its new "Definition of Solid Waste" Final Rule in the Federal Register at 80 Fed. Reg. 1694. This new rulemaking will have significant impacts regarding how secondary hazardous materials are recycled and exempted from the hazardous waste regulations. Unless challenged (and by all accounts it appears at least certain aspects may be litigated based on initial comments by various industrial sectors) the rule becomes effective on July 13, 2015, where EPA is the authorized implementing agency (Iowa, Alaska, American Samoa, and Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands). Because RCRA is a federally delegated program, other states will have to adopt the more stringent aspects of the rule discussed below.

06.10.2014 [CERCLA Will Not Save a Toxic Tort Claim which is Barred by a State Statute of Repose](#)

By Kathleen M. Whitby

Earlier today, June 9, 2014, the United States Supreme Court handed down its decision in *CTS Corp. v. Waldburger*, et al., slip op. No. 13–339 (U.S., 6-9-2014). Reversing the Fourth Circuit, the Supreme Court held that the Superfund law's preemption of state statutes of limitation for personal injury or property damage claims does not apply to state statutes of repose. Not every state has such a statute on the books, but for those that do, this may provide an additional shield for defendants, and an additional hurdle for plaintiffs.

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