EPA Issues Draft Biosolids PFAS Risk Assessment

On January 14, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued its draft risk assessment for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) chemicals in biosolids, commonly known as sewage sludge. If finalized, this risk assessment could significantly affect how wastewater treatment plants handle their sewage sludge byproducts and wastes. It also will affect those that discharge wastes into wastewater treatment systems, as regulators seek to reduce the introduction of PFAS into such systems and then into their biosolids.

According to the EPA's press release announcing the draft risk assessment, the document concludes based on modeling that human health risks may be associated with land application and other common methods of managing sewage sludges containing PFAS. According to EPA, such risks can be present in some scenarios of biosolids containing one part per billion PFAS, which is at or near the current analytical detection limits.

The EPA says its analysis does not suggest the general food supply is affected by biosolids containing PFAS.

The draft risk assessment will be published in the Federal Register and subject to a 60-day public comment period. The EPA has established a web page for related information and it will hold a public webinar on January 15 to discuss this development.

This risk assessment has been identified in the EPA's PFAS Strategic Roadmap for several years and has been long anticipated by those following federal and state PFAS regulatory developments because of its potential to drive biosolids management and to drive information-gathering and discharge limits for PFAS entering wastewater treatment systems.

This post was drafted by [Jim Price](#), an attorney in the Kansas City, Missouri, office of Spencer Fane LLP. For more information, visit [www.spencerfane.com](#).

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