

- What are wastewater sources and discharge volumes?
- Are wastewater discharges continuous or intermittent (depending on facility operations, rainfall, or other event)?

- What is the current level of treatment in place?
- One source of contaminated wastewater at PBST facilities is water that accumulates at the bottom of product tanks, known as tank bottom water. How are PBSTs currently managing this wastewater (hailed off-site for contract disposal, mixed with accumulated stormwater and treated on-site, or other means)? What determines how a PBST will dispose of its tank bottom waters? How do PBST facilities manage and treat contact stormwater?

- What is the extent of pollution prevention/recovery practices in place?
- How have EPA's stormwater regulations impacted PBST discharges?

B. EPA requests information on the industries for which the Agency states that there is incomplete data available for analysis (*i.e.*, industrial point source categories with existing effluent guidelines identified with “(4)” in the column titled “Rationale” in Tables VI–1 and industrial point source categories with no existing effluent guidelines identified with “(3)” in the column titled “Rationale” in Tables VIII–1). EPA will need to collect more information for the next biennial plan. Specifically, EPA hopes to gather the following information:

- What toxic pollutants are discharged from these industries in non-trivial amounts on an industry and per-facility basis?

- What raw material(s) or process(es) are the sources of these pollutants?
- What technologies are available (technically and economically) to control or prevent the generation and/or release of these pollutants.

C. EPA solicits comments on whether EPA used the correct evaluation factors, criteria and data sources to develop this proposed plan. Please see the record for a more detailed discussion of EPA's analysis supporting this proposal (DCN 00548, section 3.0). Also see the record for more information on how EPA's analysis differed from the analytical framework described in the draft Strategy for National Clean Water Industrial Regulations (DCN 00553, section 3.0). EPA invites comment on the appropriateness of and to suggest improvements to its approach, its identification of relevant data sources and its uses of these data.

D. EPA solicits comments on whether, and if so how, should the Agency provide EPA Regions and States with

permit-based support instead of revising effluent guidelines (*e.g.*, when the vast majority of the hazard or risk is associated with one or a few facilities).

E. EPA solicits comment on how to improve its impairment analysis to better characterize and quantify relationships between industrial point sources and impaired waters.

F. EPA solicits comment on the sources of data EPA might use to document industry efforts to voluntarily reduce pollutant discharges. EPA invites commenters to provide any information they have documenting voluntary pollution reductions by any of the industry categories regulated (or potentially regulated) by effluent limitation guidelines.

G. EPA solicits comment on the methodology for grouping industries for review and prioritization and the factors and measures EPA should consider for determining if discharges are trivial.

H. Process additives in use in the steam electric power generation point source category have changed over time. Starting in the early 1990s, some power plants began converting from the use of chlorinated compounds to brominated compounds. However, many of these plants report only total residual oxidant (TRO) as part of their NPDES permit requirements. What additional data sources are available to quantify the amount and type of brominated compounds discharged from this industry?

I. EPA solicits comment on implementation issues related to existing effluent guidelines.

Dated: December 23, 2003.

**G. Tracy Mehan III,**

*Assistant Administrator for Water.*

[FR Doc. 03–32214 Filed 12–30–03; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 6560–50–P**

## **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**

**[FRL–7605–8]**

### **Standards for the Use or Disposal of Sewage Sludge; Final Agency Response to the National Research Council Report on Biosolids Applied to Land and the Results of EPA's Review of Existing Sewage Sludge Regulations**

**AGENCY:** Environmental Protection Agency.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is publishing the results of its review of regulations under the Clean Water Act (CWA)

governing the use and disposal of sewage sludge. The Clean Water Act requires that EPA review the sewage sludge regulations for the purpose of identifying additional toxic pollutants and promulgating regulations for such pollutants consistent with the requirements. As part of this review, EPA commissioned the National Research Council (NRC) of the National Academy of Sciences to independently review the technical basis of the chemical and microbial regulations applicable to sewage sludge that is applied to land. In July 2002, the NRC published a report entitled “Biosolids Applied to Land: Advancing Standards and Practices” in response to the EPA's request.

In April 2003 EPA announced and requested public comments on a preliminary strategy explaining how EPA planned to respond to the NRC report recommendations. Today, the Agency is announcing its final response, also known as the final action plan, to the NRC report. EPA is also presenting the results of its review of existing sewage sludge regulations to identify additional toxic pollutants in sewage sludge for potential future regulations. Based on a screening assessment of chemical pollutants for which EPA had adequate data (*e.g.*, human health benchmark values, and information on fate and transport in the environment), as well as concentration data in sewage sludge for those pollutants, EPA has identified 15 pollutants for possible regulation. This list constitutes the final results of EPA's current review of existing sewage sludge regulations as required by the CWA. These pollutants will undergo a more refined risk assessment and risk characterization which may lead to a notice of proposed rulemaking under the Clean Water Act. In this notice, the term “biosolids” is used interchangeably with “sewage sludge,” which is defined in the regulations and used in the statute.

**ADDRESSES:** The public record for this action has been established under Docket ID No. OW–2003–0006. Materials are available for public viewing at the Water Docket in the EPA Docket Center, EPA West, Room B102, 1301 Constitution Ave., NW., Washington, DC. The EPA Docket Center Public Reading Room is open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding legal holidays. The telephone number for the Public Reading Room is (202) 566–1744, and the telephone number for the Water Docket is (202) 566–2426.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Rick Stevens, U.S. Environmental Protection