

May 5, 2021

MassDEP Call with Wastewater Treatment Plant Operators

CHAT

Kathleen Baskin: Update from CDC:

The CDC wastewater surveillance system is now collecting samples from 169 locations. Amy Kirby of CDC is keeping a list of wastewater utilities, cities and states who want to participate in Phase 2, which will take place this year. CDC is considering monitoring for variants of Covid-19. They have methods to detect variants and they are formulating a public health response, analyzing wastewater data along with clinical data to determine what is noise, and working with NIH to develop a wastewater database that can be linked to their Decipher system which feeds data back to health departments. They are already thinking beyond Covid-19. You can detect many pathogens in wastewater, so there is interest in continuing the use of wastewater surveillance for other pathogens. Possibilities could include antibiotic resistant genes, Norovirus or food-borne pathogens such as the E. coli in romaine lettuce. If you want to receive notifications, contact Amy Kirby at nwss@cdc.gov or agk1@cdc.gov

Kathleen Baskin: New England Water Sector Cybersecurity Forum

On May 26, 2021 from 10 am – 12 pm, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection in coordination with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), will conduct a two-hour webinar for drinking water (DW) and wastewater (WW) operators titled, “New England Water Sector Cybersecurity Forum”.

This webinar will provide an overview of cybersecurity threats, incidents, lessons learned, and recommendations for DW and WW utilities to take to reduce their cybersecurity vulnerabilities. The Department of Homeland Security/Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (DHS/CISA) expert will describe cybersecurity threats and recommendations to reduce vulnerabilities to the water sector. A Threat Analyst from WaterISAC will provide information on recent cybersecurity incidents, lessons learned, and their fundamental guide to help water utilities. An expert from EPA’s Water Security Division will discuss best management practices, EPA tools, and regulatory requirements. Finally, a panel of state agency and water industry representatives will provide state and local perspectives on actions taken to address cybersecurity vulnerabilities.

Register here: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/3323968100790793996>

Jeff Murawski, Fitchburg, MA: Funding supporting staffing & training of potential future treatment operators, and attracting candidates to Wastewater work, would be very welcomed by Wastewater Utility managers.

Jeff Murawski, Fitchburg, MA: It would be nice if there were support for the unfunded mandate.....supported by damages-restitution from the source producers.

Jeff Murawski, Fitchburg, MA: (for PFAS)

Justin Pimpare: Here is the link to the Cybersecurity training for May 26th
<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/3323968100790793996>

WBranton Scituate Sewer: Do we have clarification on who would be covered by previously mentioned retirement benefit legislation?

Mark Young: Any status of Mass being a delegated state?

Jeff Murawski, Fitchburg, MA: I will reach out to John Murphy to discuss this (operators staffing, attracting to industry) further. I am a part of NEWWA's "WaterWORKS!" Committee....and, this is the Committee's priority.

Justin Pimpare: Happy to discuss the Youth and Environment Program that has been ongoing by EPA for over 30 years now with the City of Lowell and now GLSD

Mark Young: Lowell wants to participate in the program this year.

Betsy Reilly: Any updates on the "Sewage Notification" regulations? If it turns out that ALL wastewater facilities (including those that may have SSOs) will be subject to it, do they know? Are future meetings planned?

Jeff Murawski, Fitchburg, MA: Timing of "CSO Notification" draft regulations?or..... Any further "stakeholders" meetings on this subject?

David Duest: MWRA is not seeing any chemical supplier limitations.

Mickey Nowak, MA Water Environment Association: Retirement COVID Enhancement Bill - 4 "Employee", a person by employed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; its political 5 subdivisions, state and community colleges and universities under the board of higher education 6 and the University of Massachusetts.

Mickey Nowak, MA Water Environment Association: There will be in article in Mass Waters about the Sewage Notification Bill later this week. Check mawea.org on Friday