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DEP Sets Nation's Strictest Limit on Chemical in Drinking Water

[Source: NJ Spotlight, November 2, 2017](#)

Author: Jon Hurdle

New Jersey's efforts to clean up public drinking water took a step forward on Wednesday when the Department of Environmental Protection said it would impose the nation's toughest limit on a chemical that has been linked to cancer, high cholesterol, and developmental problems in young children.

The DEP said it will set a "Maximum Contaminant Limit" of 14 parts per trillion (ppt) for PFOA (perfluorooctanoic acid), which has been used in consumer products including nonstick cookware and food packaging, and which has been found in some parts of 37 New Jersey public water systems at above the new limit in recent years.

[Read more...](#)

Also see information on a proposed limit for Perfluorononanoic acid (PFNA) in this press release from the NJ DEP, "[Christie Administration Takes Action To Enhance Protection of New Jersey's Drinking Water](#)".

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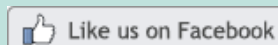
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How toxic air clouds mental health

[Source: ScienceDaily, November 2, 2017](#)

Researchers have found a link between air pollution and psychological distress. The higher the level of particulates in the air, the study showed, the greater the impact on

mental health. The study is believed to be the first to use a nationally representative survey pool, cross-referenced with pollution data at the census block level, to evaluate the connection between toxic air and mental health.

There is little debate over the link between air pollution and the human respiratory system: Research shows that dirty air can impair breathing and aggravate various lung diseases. Other potential effects are being investigated, too, as scientists examine connections between toxic air and obesity, diabetes and dementia.

[Read more...](#)

See original study in *Health & Place*, "[The effects of air pollution on individual psychological distress](#)".

Farmers exploring 'super soil' as alternative to chemicals

[Source: Rutland Herald Online, November 4, 2017](#)

Author: Allen Stein

BARTON -- As any successful farmer or gardener knows, trying to plant in soil starved of nutrients and moisture almost guarantees failure.

Working with soil treated with carbon "biochar," however, is like working with dirt on natural steroids.

Biochar is a powerful soil-builder that improves soil fertility and water retention. It reduces the need for chemicals and fertilizers and holds onto nutrients and water like a paper towel.

Even better, biochar persists in the soil for hundreds of years, proving its value as a "sustainable" resource in food production.

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Also see from *Yale Environment 360*, "[Refilling the Carbon Sink: Biochar's Potential and Pitfalls](#)".

US EPA has first public input on alternative test methods for TSCA

[Source: Chemical Watch, November 9, 2017](#)

Author: Dr. Emma Davies

The US EPA has outlined a set of goals and objectives for its strategic plan to promote the development and implementation of alternative test methods, as part of the amended toxic substances control act (TSCA).

Its focus is on risk-based decision making, said Gino Scarano from the EPA, at a public meeting co-organised by the Interagency Coordinating Committee on the Validation of Alternative Methods (Iccvam). ...

The EPA has been tasked with developing a plan for using alternative methods for TSCA testing by June 2018. The agency has outlined six goals, which match statutory requirements set out in TSCA legislation. They are to:

- promote the development and implementation of alternative test methods and strategies;
- ensure that the strategic plan is reflected in the development of requirements for

testing;

- list particular alternative test methods or strategies;
- develop criteria for scientific reliability and relevance of test methods and strategies;
- submit a progress report to Congress every five years; and
- prioritise and carry out performance assessment, validation and translational studies to accelerate the development of alternative methods/strategies.

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Boston Officially Moves Forward with Zero Waste, Hires Consultant and Forms Advisory Committee

Source: [Environmental Leader, November 6, 2017](#)

Author: Jennifer Hermes

The city of Boston has moved forward with its zero waste plan by hiring a consultant. The city announced last spring that it would be pursuing a zero waste plan and spending up to \$150,000 for consultants to review current waste operations, including identifying cost savings and efficiency opportunities. A request for bids was put out in May; now, Boston has hired MA-based Perlmutter Associates, with a consulting team that includes the Center for EcoTechnology, Zero Waste Associates, Kessler Consulting, Sound Resource Management, Eureka Recycling, Gainer and Associates and RRS, according to Waste Dive.

Boston has pulled together a Zero Waste Advisory Committee, co-chaired by the chief of streets and chief of environment, energy and open space. Committee membership is still being finalized.

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