OVER 1,000 FLORIDA PUBLICATIONS MONITORED

Florida Research

WWW.FLRESEARCH.COM

EMAIL: INFO@FLRESEARCH.COM

727—441—4101

Hazardous Waste Newsletter

March 13, 2025

CCPS Collier County Public Schools Purchasing

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

RFQu Number and Title:
#25-105 Professional Services - Group B

RFQu Due Date & Time:
2:00 PM, Tuesday, April 1, 2025
RFQus received after this time and date will not be accepted

Florida Tax Exempt #85-8012621827C-2
A 188126 (Federal) FEID 59-6000557

Individuals covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 in need of accommodations to attend public openings or meetings sponsored by the School District shall contact the Purchasing Department at (239) 377-0047, at least five (5) business days before the scheduled opening or meeting.

Collier County Public Schools (CCPS) will accept submittals to provide **Professional Services** for *Request for Qualifications (RFQu)* #25-105 Professional Services – Group B, to provide services for the following continuing professional service contracts:

A. Architectural Planning & Design
B. Asbestos Containing Building Materials & Lead Paint Abatement & Removal
C. Building Commissioning
D. Building Permitting Code Compliance
E. Construction Management
F. HVAC Testing & Balancing
G. Roofing Inspection & Re-Roof Design
H. Structural Design

Please note each item listed above is **a separate CATEGORY**. If the bidder(s) wishes to be considered for multiple categories, it shall submit separate qualifications for each category and indicate them as such in its submittal. Qualifications are due no later than the date and time listed herein.

2.3 RFQu Time Schedule

a. CCPS will attempt to use the following schedule, which will result in the selection of qualified contractor(s). Please note this timeline is subject to change without notification.

Estimated Date	Event
March 3, 2025	RFQu posted and advertised.
March 7, 14, & 21 ,2025	Advertisement notices in the local newspaper
March 21, 2025	All written questions and inquiries are due by 2:00 PM.
April 1, 2025	Submittals due no later than 2:00 PM.
April 2025	Evaluation/Rating of Submittals, The Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Administration Center, Purchasing Department, 5775 Osceola Trail, Naples, Florida 34109 (Exact time, date, room location, and virtual access (if applicable) will be determined by CCPS personnel and posted online in a Public Notice 48-hours before the meeting.
April-May 2025	Recommendation of Selection to be made by the Purchasing Department to the highest-rated contractors
June 2025	Recommendation of Selections presented to School Board for approval

1. OPENGOV

a. CCPS has partnered with OpenGov and utilizes **an e-Procurement Portal** for publishing and receiving all vendor responses to solicitations. Vendors shall visit, register, and create an account, at no cost to the vendor, on CCPS's OpenGov portal. To register and respond to this solicitation please visit:

https://procurement.opengov.com/portal/collierschools

b. By registering with OPENGOV, the vendor will be able to participate in this opportunity and receive notifications for information on this solicitation, addendums, and award information.

c. Further information on OPENGOV and the partnership with CCPS may also be found on www.collierschools.com/Page/277.

Today's Learners • Tomorrow's Leaders

5775 Osceola Trail | Naples, Florida 34109 | p: 239.377.0047 | f: 239.377.0074
e: purchasing@collierschools.com | www.collierschools.com

City of Key West

RFQ - Request for Qualifications

Environmental Engineering Services

RFQ -RFQ 25-002-0-2025/LT

The City of Key West will receive sealed bids/proposals from qualified firms to furnish the goods and/or services identified in the specifications document.

Scope of Work

The City of Key West is requesting proposals from experienced and qualified parties, persons, or firms, to perform Environmental Engineering Services for the City of Key West.

Ordering Instructions

This package can be downloaded from DemandStar Corporation on our website at http://www.demandstar.com.

Document Cost

fee, plus shipping and handling, for delivered hard copies of documents posted, only, to the DemandStar Web site; $5.00 for any document package electronically downloaded from the DemandStar Web site by members without subscriptions that include the City of Key West in their subscription service territory.

Due Date/Time

04/10/2025 3:00 PM Eastern

City of Key West

must receive bids/proposals no later than said date and time. Any bids/proposals received after the time and date specified will not be considered.

Additional Notes

NOTE: ALL PROSPECTIVE BIDDERS/ RESPONDENTS ARE HEREBY CAUTIONED NOT TO CONTACT ANY MEMBER OF THE CITY OF KEY WEST STAFF OR OFFICIALS OTHER THAN THE SPECIFIED CONTACT PERSON.

At the time of the award, the successful Bidder must show satisfactory document of such State, County and City licenses as would be required. Any permit and/or license requirement and subsequent costs are located within the bid documents. The successful Bidder must also be able to satisfy the City Attorney as to such insurance coverage and legal requirements as may be demanded in Bid. The City may reject bids: (1) for budgetary reasons, (2) if the bidder misstates or conceals a material fact in its bid, (3) if the bid does not strictly conform to the law or is nonresponsive to the bid requirements, (4) if the bid is conditional, (5) if a change of circumstances occurs making the purpose of the bid unnecessary, (6) or if such rejection is in the best interest of the City. The City may also waive any minor formalities or irregularities in any bid.

Contact	Lucas Torres-Bull,
Phone	305-809-3807
Publications	Key West Citizen,

LEGAL NOTICE
ST. LUCIE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS
RFQ No. 25-044
Professional Engineering Services
Edwards Road from S. Jenkins Road to S. 25th Street
Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study
St. Lucie County seeks sealed qualification packages from qualified firms or individuals to perform professional engineering/design services related to the fuel tank expansion project, as listed in Request for Qualifications No. 24-044. Qualifications packages will be received at the St. Lucie County Purchasing Division, 2300 Virginia Avenue, Room 228, Ft. Pierce, Florida 34982, until 3:00 p.m. Local Time, on Friday, April 9, 2025, at which time this RFQ will be publicly declared closed.
Bid documents may be obtained via download from www.DemandStar.com or by contacting the Office of the Purchasing Department at 2300 Virginia Avenue, Fort Pierce, Florida, 34982, (772) 462 1700.
Evaluation criteria for this Request for Qualifications is as follows:
1. Qualifications and ability of Firm and professional personnel (maximum of 40 points), including:
• Qualifications of Firm;
• Qualifications of proposed team;
• Qualifications of proposed subconsultants, if any; and
• Recent, current, and projected workload of the Firm, and willingness to meet contract time requirements;
2. Prior/Current Performance on projects (maximum 40 points), including:
• The prior and/or current performance of the Firm and all professionals proposed for use on the team in the planning, design, and administration of project(s) performed.
• References for a minimum of three projects for the Firm/proposed subconsultants and at least five projects on which individual team members were involved are required. To potentially achieve a high ranking here a higher number of relevant, comparable projects for the Firm and/or its team members should have been performed, backed by positive, verifiable references. Projects should be completed as recent as possible, but no later than in the past ten years.
3. Technical Approach / Methodology (maximum 20 points), including:
• The Firm's demonstrated understanding of the County's objective(s); and
• The Firm's proposed work plan to achieve those objective(s).
The County in its sole discretion, reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, accept any proposal or any combination of proposals, or waive any minor irregularity or technicality in proposals received and may, at its sole discretion, request a re-qualification, when in its sole judgment, it will best serve public interest.
CAUTION: It is the bidder's/proposer's responsibility to ensure that bids/proposals/qualifications are received in the Purchasing Division prior to the date and time specified above. Receipt of a bid/proposal/qualification in any other County office does not satisfy this requirement. St. Lucie County is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer. Participation by small, minority-owned, and women-owned businesses is encouraged.
Advertisement Date: Sunday, March 9, 2025.
PUB MARCH 9, 2025
TCN 11109302

NOTICE
The Toho Water Authority is seeking sealed proposals/bids for the following:

IFB-25-018, Water Treatment Plant #4 Well #8 Construction and Testing, DUE DATE: April 10, 2025 at 2:00 p.m. local time. Contact Brian Grover at procurement@tohowater.com.

IFB-25-002, Inspection Service for Lead Service Line Inventory, DUE DATE: April 10, 2025 at 2:00 p.m. local time. Contact Brian Grover at procurement@tohowater.com.

Bid documents are available on Bonfire at https://tohowater.bonfirehub.com.
3/09/2025 7780121

IFB-25-116 Remove & Replace an Existing IRRIGATION PUMP STATION at the Mangrove Bay Golf Course.

Due March 26, 2025 at 3 pm Mandatory Pre-Bid/ Site Visit: 1:00 pm, 3/21/25. Contact: Francesca Cicatelli – 727/893-7223 frances-ca.cicatelli@stpete.org

CITY OF ST. PETERSBURG - 727/893-7220

TRN2129887B1 PROPANE GAS & TANKS for Paratransit Vehicles.

Due March 19, 2025 at 2 pm

Primary Contact: Stacie-Ann Richards – strichards@broward.org Secondary Contact: Sonia Lovett – slovett@broward.org https://broward.bonfirehub.com/opportunities/170784

BROWARD COUNTY COMMISSION, FORT LAUDERDALE - 954/357-6066 https://www.broward.org/Purchasing/Pages/Default.aspx

City of Williston
RFP 2025-02

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) FOR CDBG-MIT GRANT ADMINISTRATION

The City of Williston hereby request proposals from qualified individuals or firms to provide grant administration services for HUD's Community Development Block Grant Mitigation (CDBG-MIT) program for the following projects:

Service Area #1 Sanitary Sewer Collection Upgrades – Lift Station Number 4 Rehabilitation Service Area:

03J – Sewer Line Replacement – The City of Williston's Sanitary Sewer Lift Station Number 4 has aging components and is in need of rehabilitation. The project proposed in this application is the demolition and replacement of the City's sanitary sewer Lift Station Number 4. The improvements will include demolition, site work, installation of new lift station, installation of new manhole, restoration of driveways and street pavement disturbed by the work.

Work to be included:

- Demolish Existing Lift Station Components
- New Sanitary Sewer Manhole and Piping
- Install New Complete Lift Station with all appurtenances
- Connect to Existing Force main
- Complete Site Work and Install New Fencing
- Repair Roadway Disturbed and Provide Access Drive

Service Area #2 – Street Repaving SE 10th Street, SE 9th Terrace, and SE 9th Street Service Area:

03K – Street Improvements - Repaving – The City of Williston's SE 10th Street, SE 9th Terrace and SE 9th Street are cracked, patched and deteriorated. The project proposed in Service Area #2 of this application is the resurfacing of these three streets. The improvements will include repaving of these streets to ensure safe ongoing access for the residents living on these streets as well as for emergency personnell serving these residents. Repaving will include repaving on SE 10th Street southward from E. Noble Avenue for approximately 2,100 linear feet; repaving of SE 9th Terrace southward from E. Noble Avenue approximately 1,000 linear feet to SE 2nd Avenue; and repaving of SE 9th Street southward from E. Noble Avenue approximately 1,100 linear feet.

The proposed work will take place in the City of Williston. Full RFP and Addendums will be posted on at https://willistonfl.org/procurement/.

Advertisement Date: March 8, 2025

Deadline for Question Submittal: March 15, 2025

Deadline for issuing of Addenda: March 25, 2025

Due Date: April 1, 2025, at 3:00 pm (Eastern Time)

Contact: Laura Jones – Grants Administrator/ Project Manager
50 NW Main Street Williston, Florida 32696 city.planner@willistonfl.org

Florida Research 727-441-4101

Demolition Bids

INVITATION TO BID

RAM Construction & Development, LLC. (RAM), CGC-062608, Construction Manager for the project known as Tallahassee State College (TSC) AC Building Renovations, located in Tallahassee, Florida, is soliciting proposals from pre-qualified trade contractors for the following bid packages based on construction documents by BKJ, Inc. Architecture.

02 - Demolition

04 - Masonry

07 - Fire Stopping

07 - Insulation

08 - Doors/Hardware

09 - Acoustical Ceiling

09 - Drywall/Metal Studs

09 - Floor Coverings/Tile

09 - Painting

10 - Specialties

15 - Fire Suppression Systems

15 - HVAC

15 - Plumbing

16 - Data/Phones/Security

16 - Electrical

BID DATE & TIME: Tuesday, March 25, 2025 @ 2:00 PM EDT

OPTIONAL PRE-BID MTG: To be held at TSC AC Building, Tallahassee, FL Thursday, March 13, 2025 @ 10:00 AM EDT.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:

- All bidders are required to be pre-qualified prior to submitting a proposal.

- Level II security background clearances for all persons working on TSC property.

- Bids over $100,000 will require a Payment & Performance Bond.

- Contractors must be registered and utilize the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's E-Verify system.

- Davis Bacon wages does not apply but certified payroll is required.

- MWSBE firms are encouraged to participate.

Plans, Specs, Addenda and Prequalification Forms can be found via the link below:

https://ramconstructionanddevelopment.sharefile.com/public/share/webs077209e748a64d21a0c60522a644a03e

For information regarding bid packages and/or pre-qualification forms, please contact Brett Daniels or Cole Yetso at estimator@ramflorida.com or at (850) 671-7267.

Sealed proposals will be received by RAM, at our corporate office, until the time listed below. Proposals will be publicly opened and read aloud. Proposals received after this time will not be accepted and will be returned to the bidder unopened.

RAM reserves the right to accept or reject any/all proposal(s) in the best interest of the TSC or RAM.

INVITATION TO BID

Rippee Construction, Inc., CGC1522435, Construction Manager for Florida State University Law School Lecture Hall 101 & 103 Interior Renovation Project, will receive sealed bids from qualified trade contractors for the following work:

BID PACKAGES:

02 41 Selective Demolition

06 00 Millwork

09 21 Gypsum Board Assemblies

09 51 Acoustical Ceilings

09 60 Flooring

09 91 Painting, Coatings, & Sealants

23 00 HVAC

26 00 Electrical

BID DOCUMENTS: Can be obtained electronically by request: destiny@rippeeconstruction.com. Hard copies can be purchased from The Blueprint Shop, 534 North Monroe Street, Tallahassee, FL 32301. Phone: 850-

224-2699.

BID REQUIREMENTS: All bids shall be submitted in accordance with Instructions to Bidders and other instructions contained in the Project Manual. All bidders must be pre-qualified prior to submitting a bid. Prequalification forms can be obtained by email: destiny@rippeeconstruction.com. Performance and Payment Bonds shall be required for all subcontracts over $100,000.

PRE-BID: 1:00 PM, Wednesday, March 26, 2025, at the North Entrance of the project location:

College of Law

425 W Jefferson Street

Tallahassee, FL 32306

BID OPENING: 2:00 PM, Wednesday, April 9, 2025, at the office of Rippee Construction Inc., 2107 Delta Way,

Tallahassee, FL 32303.

Rippee Construction, Inc. reserves the right to waive any irregularities and to accept or reject any and/or all bids deemed to be in the best interest of Florida State University or Rippee Construction, Inc.

Please call our office with any questions: (850) 668-6805

TAYLOR COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
TAYLOR TECH BLDG 'C'
MILWRIGHT ADDITION
2333 S. BYRON BUTLER PKWY
PERRY, FLORIDA 32348

You are invited to bid on a General Contract, including selective demolition and an addition for the existing Millwright lab in Perry, Florida. The addition consists of approximately 3000 sq. ft. All Bids must be on a lump sum basis; segregated Bids will not be accepted.

All Bidders must possess a state license as a general contractor. The contractor must have 5 years experience with commercial and instructional construction. The contractor must be able to demonstrate in letter form to the School Board of at least two other school related projects and at least 5 previous metal building erection experiences of a similar scope and size. The contractor must have an approved OSHA safety plan for all work and be able to produce the metal finish and weather tightness warranty for all work completed.

A Mandatory Pre-Bid Conference will be held for General Contractors on March 25, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. EST. at Building A of Big Bend Technical College at 3233 S. Byron Butler Pkwy. Perry, FL 32348

Taylor County School Board Office will receive bids until 10:30 A.M. EST on Tuesday, April 8, 2025 at the Taylor County School Board Office, 318 N. Clark Street, Perry, FL. Bids received after that time will not be accepted. Bids will be immediately opened publicly and read aloud at 10:35 A. M. of the same day. For Bid documents call DAN ANDERSON at 850-672-0067.

Demolition Bids

LEGAL Newspaper Advertisement:

INVITATION TO BID – Lee County School District

INVITATION FOR BIDS:
Lee County School District – Bonita Springs Elementary School
10701 Dean Street
Bonita Springs, FL 34135

Gulfpoint Construction Company, Inc., Construction Manager (referred to herein as CM) office located at 9240 Marketplace Road, Suite 1, Fort Myers, Florida 33912 is requesting SEALED bids from qualified subcontractors and suppliers for the partial tear down of the existing elementary school and subsequent rebuilding of a new educational facility

Scope of work includes but is not limited to: Demolition, Concrete, Masonry, Steel, Wood, Plastics, and Composites, Thermal and Moisture Protection, Openings, Finishes, Specialties, Equipment, Exterior Furnishings, Conveying Equipment, Fire Suppression, Plumbing, HVAC, Electrical, Communications, Safety and Security, Earthwork, Exterior Improvements, Utilities, and Miscellaneous Construction.

Instructions to bidders: If there are any questions or concerns, please ask by calling or emailing Michael Miller at mike@gpconstruction.com, Gulfpoint Construction Company, Inc. (239) 768-1800 or faxing your request to (239) 768-1271.

Sealed Bids are DUE to Gulfpoint Construction Company, Inc.'s office located at 9240 Marketplace Road, Suite 1, Fort Myers, FL 33912, on Thursday April 3, 2025, no later than 10:00AM EST. A non-mandatory pre-bid conference will be TBD.

Bidders must include proof of proper license and insurance. Insurance requirements are listed below. If these items are not included the bid will be considered non-compliant. Please e-mail mike@gpconstruction.com to request a sample insurance certificate for limits.Any, and all requests for information (RFI) are to be submitted clearly in writing via fax (239)768-1271 or e-mail correspondence mike@gpconstruction.com. The deadline for RFI's is 2:00PM EST on Wednesday, March 19, 2025.Plans and Documents will be available on Monday, March 3, 2025.A scheduled walk through is TBD.Bond may be required per trade and subcontractors.Subcontractors submitting bids must certify that they have reviewed all plans, specifications and addendums, and have bid per plans and specifications.Sealed bids must be delivered by 10:00AM EST on Thursday, April 3, 2025, to Gulfpoint Construction Company, Inc., 9240 Marketplace Road, Suite 1, Fort Myers, FL 33912. Gulfpoint Construction Company, Inc. will not be held liable for mishandled postal or parcel services deliveries.Bids will be publicly opened on April 3, 2025, at 1:00 P.M. EST at 9240 Marketplace Road, Suite 1, Fort Myers, FL 33912.DO NOT contact the Owner or Engineer.

March 7, 14, 21, 28, 2025
March 7, 14, 21, 28 2025
LSAR0251123

Miami-Dade County is soliciting interested contractors to register to participate and perform in Miscellaneous Construction Contract (MCC) Bids under the MCC 7040 & 7360 Plan projects. Contractual Opportunities are continuously available for all businesses located in Miami-Dade who are interested in doing business with the County.
REGISTERING WITH MIAMI-DADE COUNTY MUST BE DONE VIA MIAMI-DADE COUNTY'S AUTOMATED WEB-BASED VENDOR REGISTRATION PORTAL. Please visit the INTERNAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT (ISD) Vendor Services page at http://supplier.miamidade.gov., to enroll as a vendor. **If you have any vendor registration questions please contact Vendor Assistance at (305) 375-5773.**
The types of contracts available under the MCC Program are construction projects, facility repairs, neighborhood improvements, emergency repairs and maintenance work with a maximum value of $5.0M; ORD 09-101. All capital departments are participating.

Additional opportunities are available through Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) which enables low-income families to reduce their energy bills by making their homes more energy efficient. Funds are used to improve the energy performance of dwellings by families in need, using the most advanced technologies and testing procedures available in the housing industry. Measures to make homes more energy efficient include: replacement or installation of key components, installation of energy recovery ventilation systems including bathroom and kitchen exhaust fans and installation of whole mechanical exhaust systems to provide better indoor air quality, install attic insulation, install window solar films, repair or replace inefficient cooling units, repair or replace water heaters and address air infiltration with weather stripping, caulking thresholds, minor wall repairs, ceiling and floors, windows and doors.

All solicitations are available online at: https://www8.miamidade.gov/Apps/ISD/DPMWW/SolicitationList.aspx

For Miami-Dade County Legal Ads online: https://www.miamidade.gov/global/navigation/legal-ad-index.page

License Requirements - At the time of Bid and pursuant to the requirements of Section 10-3 of the Code of Miami-Dade County, Florida and Request for Price Quotation (RPQ) and Contract Documents, the Bidder and all its subcontractor must hold a valid, current, and active State and/or Miami-Dade County contractor's license consistent with the requirements of the Scope of Work.

A V A I L A B L E MCC 7360 PLAN – REQUEST FOR PRICE QUOTATION (RPQ)

5) Sheriff Office – Maggie Acosta - Telephone No.: (305) 471-2583

RPQ No. PDC-W22010 - MDSO Training Bureau Auditorium and Bathroom Renovations

ESTIMATED COST: $1,162,000.00

LICENSE REQUIREMENT: General Building Contractor

SCOPE OF WORK:

The scope of work consists of the auditorium and bathroom renovations at the MDSO Training Bureau located at 9601 NW 58 Street, Doral, FL 33173.

The bidder shall examine the site carefully to determine the scope of work and satisfy him/herself as to all observable conditions. Any questions regarding materials or obstacles that might be expected must be clarified during the bidding period.

Work includes, but is not limited to, furnishing all materials, labor, services, supervision, tools, equipment, permits, and all other items necessary to complete the entire scope of work included in all construction documents and specifications. The bid price is also to include asbestos survey and the abatement of all non-friable asbestos (if applicable), all related permit fees and permitting expenses related therewith.

All work is to be performed in accordance with the latest edition of the Florida Building Code (FBC) and all local, state, and federal regulations and MIAMI DADE COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT TRAINING CENTER RENOVATION construction documents and specifications for permit application number C2024164725. The bid price shall include the removal and proper off-site disposal of all work-related debris.

This is a high security facility where all employees need to provide a driver's license or other form of identification and will be subject to a background check prior to being granted access to site. Prospective bidders must show experience in projects in police facilities, a minimum of 2 projects in the last five years. The work must be carried out in a manner that will not disturb the daily business operations of the building patrons. All work must be carried out during the hours of 7:00 am and before 5:00 pm. Any work to be performed outside of these hours must be coordinated and pre-approved by the County Project Manager. The Contractor must provide, at least 48 hours' notice prior to any work performed outside of the specified time frame. All work performed outside of the aforementioned working hours must be for the benefit of the Contractor. The County will not be responsible for paying any additional compensation for working outside the aforementioned working hours.

BID SUBMITTAL:
THE APPROVED SET OF DRAWINGS AND TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS ARE AVAILABLE TO BIDDERS AT THE FOLLOWING LINK BELOW AND PASSWORD:

https://sblm10036-my.sharepoint.com/:f:/g/personal/shartley_sblm_com/Er_NbDVFz6VLn8tlAd6200gBoDzwXCYMl1svFK7GCbgW0g?e=xxfUJI
Password: MDPD2025!@

UNINCORPORATED MIAMI DADE COUNTY:
PERMIT APPLICATION#'S: C2024164725
PERMIT TYPE: BUILDING COMMERCIAL

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION:
ALL RFI SHALL BE SUBMITTED BY 2:00 PM, ON 4/16/2025

Contractor must refer to the Request for Price Quotation (RPQ) and associated project documents for the detail Scope of Work.

RPQ BID DUE DATE: April 30, 2025 @ 2:00 PM – MANDATORY Pre-Bid Meeting – March 26, 2025 @10:00 AM – 9601 NW 58 St., Doral FL 33172 - MANDATORY Site Meeting – March 26, 2025 @10:00 AM – 9601 NW 58 St., Doral FL 33172 - Contact Person: Maggie Acosta – Email address: ma.acosta@mdso.com

Florida Research 727-441-4101

Miramar deserves a zero-waste future — not toxic incinerators

Zuri DaCosta

Landfills? A trash incinerator? Not in my Miramar backyard — and they ought to not be in any community across Florida.

On March 11, voters have the power to elect leaders who will champion real climate justice, not outdated, toxic waste solutions. Some elected officials in Miami and beyond continue to push for incinerators and landfills despite decades of evidence proving their devastating health and environmental impacts.

Miami-Dade County has recently begun incorporating zero-waste policies into its environmental agenda, a significant victory for climate advocates. This shift acknowledges that the growing waste crisis should be tackled with proven solutions like composting, robust recycling programs and waste reduction incentives, not polluting incinerators.

Consider this: According to the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA), incinerators emit 68% more greenhouse gases per unit of energy than coal plants, making them one of the most toxic and climate-damaging waste disposal methods. Worse, these facilities are almost always placed in communities of color, where residents suffer from increased rates of asthma, heart disease and cancer due to prolonged exposure to air pollution.

Fortunately, there is a consensus among essential stakeholders in Miramar that trash burning is not a solution. With a population that is 46.3% Black and 36.2% Latino, the city's voters have the power in their hands to reject a dangerous pattern — one that has already inflicted lasting harm on Black and Brown communities. Miami's "Old Smokey" incinerator in West Coconut Grove, which operated for nearly 50 years, left behind a legacy of toxic exposure, prompting an ongoing class-action lawsuit from residents who still suffer the consequences.

It is disingenuous to say that state-of-the-art incinerators are clean and safe. Miramar Mayor Wayne Messam pointed out that "The city of Miramar reviewed the Florida Department of Environmental Protection records for a similar state-of-the-art incinerator in Palm Beach County. Since its 2015 launch, there have been 245 emissions malfunctions and numerous complaints of foul odors."

Then-Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill famously noted 43 years ago that "All politics is local," and it's true: A commissioner or a mayor could have a more immediate and long-term impact on a community than the president of the United States.

However, local elections across the country have consistently low turnouts. Between 15% and 27% of voters go to the polls to vote for a commissioner, mayor or member of a school board. That means a small minority chooses representatives who wield significant decision-making power, impacting the lives of countless Florida residents across various municipalities and counties.

According to Jan Brennan of the National Civic League, "Affluent voters have a 30% to 50% higher turnout in local elections than low-income voters. Those 65 and older are seven times more likely to vote in local elections than voters aged 18 to 34. The median age of local election voters is in their 60s, with the average in cities such as Miami, Las Vegas and Fort Worth as high as 66 to 68 years old. ... The overall impact is that local elected officials and policy are disproportionately influenced by older, affluent white voters, undermining our representative democracy and the effectiveness of local governments."

These U.S. voters elect more than 500,000 local officials who control over $2 trillion in local government spending. So I encourage all of us to participate in this crucial election, because so many things are decided locally.

Miramar voters must hold elected officials accountable. We've seen the damage incinerators cause everywhere. On March 11, let's demand real climate solutions and vote for the candidates with the best plans to fight for climate justice.

Zuri DaCosta, of Miramar, is a member of Florida Rising and serves on its South Florida Electoral Engagement Committee.

Sun Sentinel March 10, 2025

FISCAL DECISION

RYAN LYNCH | OBJ

Orlando Health will close one of the hospitals it acquired in Brevard County, but eventually will replace it.

Orlando Health to close hospital

The building will be demolished and the land sold.

BY RYAN LYNCH
rlynch@bizjournals.com

Orlando Health will close one of the hospitals it acquired in Brevard County and hinted at plans to replace it with a new state-of-the-art facility.

The nonprofit system said it will close the 298-bed Rockledge Hospital and four hospital-based outpatient departments by April 22. The system acquired Rockledge along with a 119-bed Melbourne hospital and a 145-bed Sebastian River hospital in a $460 million deal with Steward Health Care.

The system won't close Orlando Health Melbourne Hospital or Orlando Health Sebastian River Hospital.

"Following in-depth inspections that could only occur after [the] acquisition, it was determined that the cost to repair and renovate Rockledge Hospital far exceeds the cost of a new, state-of-the-art hospital," the system said in a prepared statement.

Orlando Health found that Rockledge Hospital's electrical, HVAC and plumbing systems were failing. "This decision [to close the hospital] is necessary to ensure the safety of patients and team members," added Orlando Health.

The hospital may scale back some operations before April 22.

No other details such as the cost, location or timeline of the future facility were shared.

Once the Rockledge hospital closes, Orlando Health will demolish the building and sell the land, with its other properties near the campus being evaluated for future use.

Orlando Health has more than 3,000 open positions, with all employees who are in good standing and willing to work at other locations being guaranteed jobs. Roughly 940 positions are being affected by the hospital's closure, according to a notice filed with the state.

"This decision [to close the hospital] is necessary to ensure the safety of patients and team members."
Orlando Health

Some of the open jobs would require commuting or relocation.

Meanwhile, another health system in the region also has ramped up expansion.

Health First spokesman Lance Skelly told *OBJ* the nonprofit health system is ahead of schedule on its Cape Canaveral Hospital and medical office building, which are set to open in early 2027. It also plans to open two new freestanding emergency departments by 2027 in the county in locations to be announced.

In addition, Health First added a second full-time First Flight Air Ambulance that will serve the northern part of the county.

REAL ESTATE MATTERS

Long-term radon test useful tool

By Ilyce Glink and Samuel J. Tamkin
Tribune Content Agency

DREAMSTIME

Q: This isn't a question, but a comment/suggestion. I read one of your columns on your website talking about taking care of the small stuff when it comes time to list your home for sale.

You advise people to get a home inspection before they market their home. And, you suggested that they can make all the repairs to the home before they list it for sale. You also said that you can use the presale inspection as a marketing strategy.

I wanted to add to your suggestions. I would also advise having a long-term radon test (90 days to one year) done on a home before homeowners market the home for sale. This is much better than the short-term test after signing a contract. Long-term tests are more accurate, and if you need to install a mitigation system, it allows the seller time to shop around.

A: Thanks for your suggestion. Sounds like you've got some first-hand experience with radon causing problems for a home seller.

First, a refresher on radon. Radon is an odorless and colorless gas that can cause extremely serious health problems, including lung cancer. In fact, it is the leading cause of lung cancer in non-smokers. Children are at a much greater risk, according to the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services.

The gas comes into homes from underground and seeps in through cracks in the basement floors or where the walls and floors join. When radon does get in, the levels can increase until they become a health hazard. You can't smell it or see it. That's partly what makes it so dangerous. The EPA recommends that homeowners take action when the levels of radon are greater than 4 pCi/L (or 150 Bq/m3). These are the customary measures used to determine the level of radon: picocuries per liter or becquerels per cubic meter. It's a way to measure the amount of radon in a volume of air.

The EPA has a map that assigns three levels of radon to areas in the U.S. Most of the Midwest, upper Midwest and Northeast states tend to have higher levels of radon than the South or West Coast.

If you live in an area where there could be higher levels of radon, test to see if your home's radon levels are below the EPA recommended levels. Our reader recommends taking a longer term approach to reading radon levels. From our reading of various sources, and talking to various contractors through the years (and testing our own basement), radon levels can fluctuate greatly depending on the weather and even the time of season. The levels may vary seasonally or be higher or lower in different years, so you might want to test every so often.

Radon inspectors will typically place radon readers in basement levels and first floor levels of homes for around 48 hours or so before taking them down and evaluating the test. Homeowners will be asked to close air ducts, windows and doors in areas being tested. In essence, they want the monitored rooms to be sealed off to let the radon accumulate to get the level of radon in a closed environment.

What our reader is saying is that a two-day test may sample the home when radon levels are at their highest or lowest but may not provide an overall accurate reading for the home. In Sam's deals where radon levels are above 4.0 pCi/L, the homeowners usually install a radon remediation system.

In the most basic sense, a radon remediation system is one that pulls air out from below the foundation and draws it to the exterior. The reasoning is that the system will catch the radon gas before it infiltrates the home. These systems have a fan that continually pulls air out at all times. In homes with sump pumps, the system may cover the sump pump area and pull that air out.

A long-term test should provide additional information on the long-term levels of radon in a home, as our reader suggests. But, it's unclear what will satisfy a prospective buyer. You might put in one system and think it works perfectly well. But a buyer might hire a radon inspector who tests when the levels are high, and you'll be asked to install a different system.

If you test over time and discover that you have high radon levels, you might want to consider installing a remediation system. Even if you don't have young children in the house.

Ilyce Glink is the CEO of Best Money Moves and Samuel J. Tamkin is a real estate attorney. Contact them through the website ThinkGlink.com.

Orlando Sentinel March 8, 2025

Florida Research 727-441-4101

D.A. VARELA dvarela@miamiherald.com

Turkey Point nuclear plant sits in a low-lying area in Miami-Dade County that's vulnerable to flooding.

Miami Herald March 5, 2025

Is Turkey Point prepared for future risks?

BY RACHEL SILVERSTEIN AND EDWARD R. ORNSTEIN

Miami-Dade's aging nuclear plant, Turkey Point, has been granted a license to operate two reactors through 2053 — an unprecedented 20-year lifeline beyond its current expiration date.

The Federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has granted this license extension despite ongoing safety concerns, including potential contamination of our drinking water aquifer and clear risks from heat, storms and flooding.

Given this, it's fair to question whether this plant is prepared for the coming decades. That's why Miami Waterkeeper has appealed this licensing decision. And not for the first time.

Driven by concerns over reliance on unsustainable fossil fuels, many Americans are open to promises of improved, safer nuclear energy technologies.

In the words of President Donald Trump, "Fears about nuclear power are really about a few disasters [like] Fukushima, Three Mile Island and that these are old systems, and that they're much more capable now and they're capable of making even better systems."

But South Florida's Turkey Point is not a new system; it's older than Chernobyl and Three Mile Island — and only a year younger than Fukushima.

If Turkey Point's latest license extension holds, it will be operating half a century beyond the end of its original 30-year license.

In 2022, after years of challenges and appeals by Miami Waterkeeper and our partners, Natural Resources Defense Council and Friends of the Earth, the NRC overturned a similar 20-year license extension request for Turkey Point.

The NRC, siding with us, ordered FPL back to the drawing board to take a harder look at environmental issues, including climate risks and groundwater contamination at the site. But when FPL re-applied for the license last summer, its risk assessment still lacked meaningful analysis to reassure us that its unique vulnerabilities were fully considered.

This past April, the U.S. Government Accountability Office even released a groundbreaking report, identifying Turkey Point as one of the most climate-vulnerable nuclear plants in the country, facing risks ranging from heat to flooding to storms.

The Turkey Point reactors sit in a low-lying area that's vulnerable to flooding. Although the actual nuclear core is elevated, best-case-scenario models from the University of Florida suggest that by 2040 the area surrounding Turkey Point — including the roads in and out, the backup power and possibly even the spent fuel stored on-site — could be under water.

During 2023's heat wave, the average "cooling" canal temperatures neared 100 degrees. Hurricanes are getting stronger and rainfall more intense. And yet, FPL refuses to address the plant's risks fully.

No less problematic, the plant's unlined cooling canal system is contaminating our underground drinking water supply with a plume that has been spreading underground for decades. The plume has even been clocked moving at a rate of more than one foot per day toward the Florida Keys' drinking water wellfield.

Despite being ordered to pull the contaminated water back to its property, and for years asserting that it will, FPL has failed to fix this crisis. In a recent report, FPL now admits that its remediation isn't going to work as intended. We, the residents of South Florida, will pay the price for any of this contamination

Extending the operating license for the Turkey Point plant shouldn't be just a bureaucratic checkbox. It's a decision with profound implications for Miami's environment and safety.

And significant questions remain: Is Turkey Point prepared for a major hurricane? Will the FPL be able to operate the reactor during flooding? Or as temperatures climb, will cooling canals continue to contaminate our drinking water supply?

Before we green light decades of risky operations at the Turkey Point plant, FPL and the federal government must demonstrate, beyond a shred of any doubt, that the reactors will not lead to a future catastrophe for Miami.

Rachel Silverstein is the CEO of Miami Waterkeeper and Edward R. Ornstein is the deputy general counsel for the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida. Reach her at rachel@miamiwaterkeeper.org.

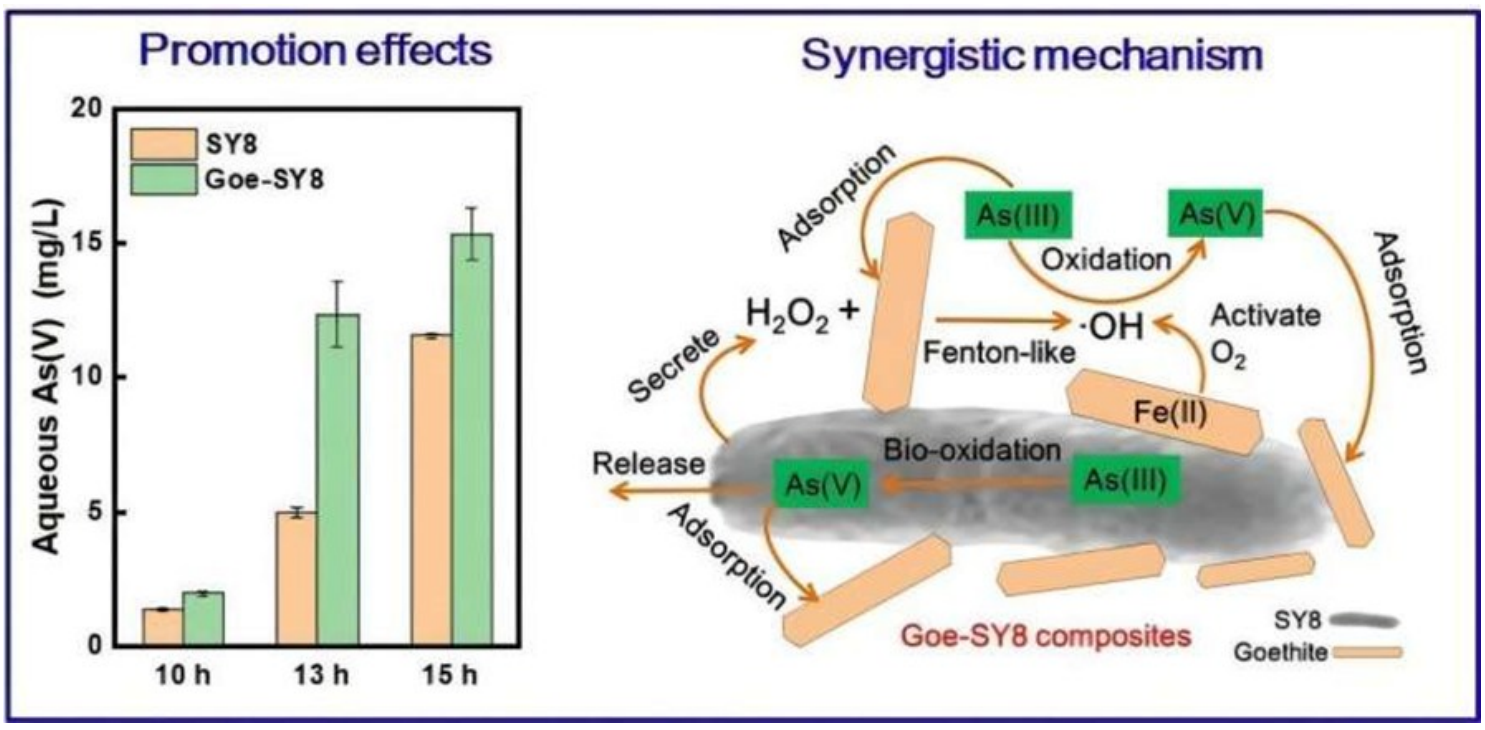
Arsenic detoxification: How bacteria and minerals work together

by Nanjing Institute of Environmental Sciences, MEE
phys.org
March 6, 2025

A study has uncovered a novel approach to detoxifying toxic arsenic in contaminated soils, offering hope for tackling one of the world's most pressing environmental health challenges. The research shows that the interaction between arsenic-oxidizing bacteria and goethite, a common Fe mineral, significantly accelerates the conversion of arsenic from its highly toxic form, arsenite [As(III)], into the less harmful arsenate [As(V)].

The formed As(V) can be adsorbed on the surfaces of Fe mineral, which is further enhanced by the presence of humic acid, a natural organic compound. These findings suggest a promising, sustainable solution to arsenic pollution, which could be leveraged for more effective remediation strategies.

The findings are published in the journal *Eco-Environment & Health*.



Synergistic Mechanism of Arsenic Detoxification by Goethite and Arsenic-Oxidizing Bacteria (SY8). This figure illustrates the synergistic mechanism by which goethite (Goe) and arsenic-oxidizing bacteria (SY8) enhance arsenic detoxification. The bacteria oxidize toxic arsenite [As(III)] to less harmful arsenate [As(V)], a process amplified by goethite's catalytic effects. The interaction between the bacteria and goethite promotes the generation of hydroxyl radicals (·OH), activating the oxidation process, and enhancing arsenic adsorption and immobilization, which significantly reduces arsenic mobility in contaminated environments. The data on the left shows the increased aqueous As(V) levels at different time points for SY8 alone and the Goe-SY8 composite. Credit: Eco-Environment & Health

Arsenic contamination of soils presents severe risks to human health and ecosystems, primarily due to the high toxicity and mobility of arsenite [As(III)]. While arsenate [As(V)] is less toxic and more easily immobilized, converting As(III) into As(V) is a critical step in detoxification efforts. Microorganisms and minerals like iron oxides are essential components in this transformation process.

However, the intricate interactions between bacteria, minerals, and organic matter in soil environments are complex and not fully understood. These interactions can either enhance or hinder the detoxification process, depending on environmental conditions. Addressing these challenges is crucial for improving arsenic remediation strategies.

The research, by researchers from Huazhong Agricultural University, China, investigated the synergistic effects of goethite, humic acid, and arsenic-oxidizing bacteria (SY8) on arsenic detoxification. Using advanced spectroscopic techniques and controlled experiments, the researchers explored how these components interact to enhance the oxidation of toxic As(III) into the safer As(V). The findings offer new insights into the mechanisms driving arsenic transformation, providing a potential pathway for more effective soil remediation.

The study revealed that while goethite—a common Fe mineral—initially inhibited the growth of the arsenic-oxidizing bacterium SY8, it significantly boosted its ability to oxidize As(III) by the goethite and SY8 composites. This enhancement was attributed to hydroxyl radicals (·OH) generated through Fenton-like reactions, catalyzed by the interaction between goethite and the bacteria.

Additionally, humic acid improved arsenic adsorption on mineral surfaces, reducing its mobility in the environment. Interestingly, the researchers noted that although goethite hindered bacterial growth, it played a crucial role in accelerating As(III) oxidation during the mid-phase of incubation. This dual function of goethite—both inhibitory and catalytic—emphasizes the complexity of microbial-mineral interactions in arsenic remediation.

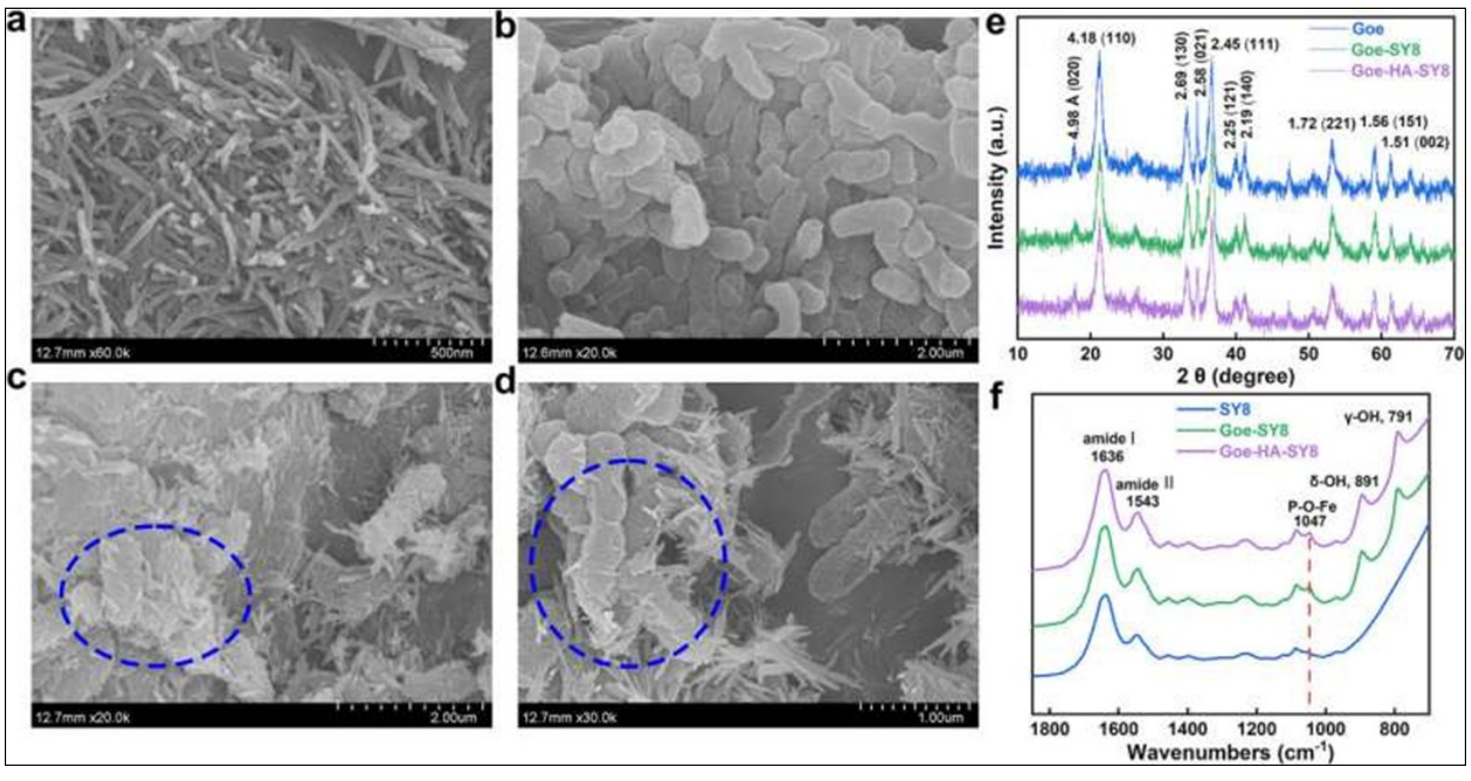
The study also highlighted that As(III) oxidation was most efficient under neutral to slightly alkaline conditions, underscoring the importance of pH management in remediation strategies.

Dr. Xiaoming Wang, the study's senior author, emphasized the significance of the study's findings: "This research underscores the importance of understanding the intricate interactions between microbes, minerals, and organic matter in arsenic-contaminated environments. By harnessing these natural processes, we can develop more sustainable and effective arsenic remediation strategies, ultimately reducing the impact of arsenic on human health and ecosystems."

The implications of this study are far-reaching, particularly in agricultural and industrial areas where arsenic contamination poses a serious threat to food safety and water quality. By leveraging the synergistic effects of bacteria and minerals, the study opens up possibilities for cost-effective, environmentally friendly remediation techniques. These could include bioaugmentation strategies, where arsenic-oxidizing bacteria are introduced to contaminated sites, or the use of mineral amendments to enhance natural detoxification processes.

Moreover, the findings encourage the integration of microbial-mineral interactions into broader soil health management practices, offering a holistic approach to combating arsenic pollution and improving soil quality for sustainable agriculture.

Provided by Nanjing Institute of Environmental Sciences, MEE



SEM images of goethite (a), SY8 (b), Goe-SY8 binary composites (c), and Goe-HA-SY8 ternary composites (d) (the dotted circles indicated the typical area of closely interaction between goethite and SY8), and XRD patterns (e) and FTIR spectra (f) of single component and their composites. Noted that the samples for XRD characterization were treated with H_2O_2 to exclude the interference of organic matter. Credit: *Eco-Environment & Health* (2024). DOI: 10.1016/j.eehl.2024.12.001

Gaps in Oregon landfill emissions rule allow some operators

Oregon implemented the strictest landfill gas emissions rule in the nation in 2021. But a report from Beyond Toxics argues exemptions have allowed private operators to avoid monitoring large areas.

Published March 7, 2025

Jacob Wallace Editor

Wastedive.com

A new report is calling into question the efficacy of Oregon's uniquely strict landfill emissions monitoring rule. Legislation enabling greater monitoring capabilities, plus an increase in enforcement, may help address the rule's gaps.

Private landfill operators are exempting large swathes of their facilities from Oregon's tight emissions regulations, shrouding potential sources of greenhouse gas emissions, according to a report from environmental group Beyond Toxics.

The finding comes after Oregon regulators implemented a rule in 2021 that required more landfills to monitor methane emissions and install a gas collection and control system if they exceeded certain levels. It also tightened monitoring requirements for large landfills already tracking their emissions.

Landfills subject to more stringent monitoring requirements began reporting regularly to the state's Department of Environmental Quality in 2022. But Beyond Toxics said that three of the 11 landfills that should have been reporting those emissions were not. And private landfill operators were exempting nearly half their surface areas from monitoring requirements, while public landfill operators were exempting about 10% of their landfills from the requirements.

Waste Connections exempted the most surface area of any operator — about 70% of its Dry Creek Landfill was not monitored for surface emissions in 2023, Beyond Toxics found. The company, which operates two other landfills in the state, did not respond to a request for comment.

Those large data gaps lead to questions about whether private operators are following the spirit of the law, said Mason Leavitt, a data analytics specialist at Beyond Toxics who led the report.

"There's not any real accountability here," Leavitt said.

Oregon's rules are the strictest in the nation for landfill emissions. They stem from a 2020 executive order signed by then-Gov. Kate Brown addressing the state's greenhouse gas emissions. The order set a goal to reduce the state's greenhouse gas emissions by 45% by 2035 and by 80% by 2050, compared to a 1990 baseline. It specifically called for action on methane gas from landfills.

Federal rules regarding landfill gas emissions regulate based on the generation of non-methane organic compounds. They do not require action based on methane generation. But methane is a climate pollutant more than 80 times more potent than carbon dioxide over 20 years, leading multiple states, including Oregon, California, Maryland and Washington, to set their own standards that are more stringent than the U.S. EPA's. Those rules have specific triggers based on methane generation rate to address greenhouse gas emissions.

Environmental groups say enforcing those rules is paramount to see meaningful improvements, but that has proven difficult for regulators. Beyond Toxics' analysis of annual and semi-annual emissions reports from landfill operators in Oregon revealed gaps in enforcement of the state's rule.

Landfills that have at least 200,000 tons of waste in place and generate more than 664 tons of methane annually must submit quarterly monitoring reports unless they are in the process of installing a gas collection and control system, per Oregon rules. Two landfills that meet the threshold to submit those reports received reporting exemptions from the state in 2023.

But one, the Roseburg Landfill owned by Douglas County, appears to have avoided submitting monitoring reports altogether in 2023 despite meeting the threshold, flouting Oregon rules.

That landfill generated the second-most methane of any landfill in the state in 2022, per state records obtained by Beyond Toxics. Republic Services' Coffin Butte Landfill generated the third most emissions while WM's Columbia Ridge Landfill generated the most, per state records.

Private operators didn't measure emissions at large sections of their landfills

In Q4 2023, the percentage of landfill surface area that private operators opted to exempt from monitoring requirements was much higher than the percentage that public operators opted to exempt.

A spokesperson for DEQ said Douglas County had personnel changes shortly after the rules were issued and officials there initially failed to understand the new requirements. The department said it "investigated and informed the landfill of the missed requirement, [and] the landfill initiated surface emission monitoring in the second quarter of 2024."

The landfill has a gas collection and control system that predates the new rules. Douglas County is now in the process of bringing it into compliance — it must submit a design plan by June 7 and ensure the system is up to code and operational by Dec. 7, 2026.

So far, no landfill operator has been fined by DEQ for being out of compliance with the rule, according to the agency. Leavitt said the lack of enforceability of Oregon's rules is contributing to a culture of neglect. He noted the EPA also lacks the resources to follow up on landfills' emissions monitoring and capture systems even when it detects compliance issues.

Republic Services' Coffin Butte Landfill in Benton County, Oregon, is one such example, according to Leavitt. EPA inspectors have visited the landfill twice in recent years. A 2022 inspection report from the agency documented instances where vegetation broke through the landfill's cover. Elsewhere, gas extraction wells that are meant to pump methane into the landfill's control system appeared to have been damaged or failed. The EPA found similar issues in a follow-up visit two years later.

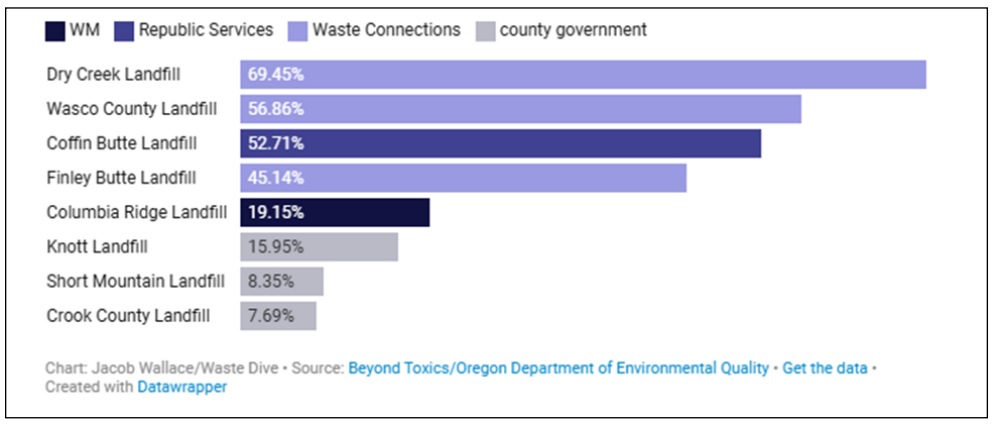
Those breaks can lead to significant methane leaks. In one area, a cap had come off a gas extraction well that was sending methane directly into the air, per the EPA's 2024 report. The well was emitting more than 118,000 parts per million of the gas, 236 times the federal limit. The EPA inspector found 41 methane leaks exceeding the limit in total at the landfill.

The agency has yet to publicize an enforcement action against the company. The EPA did not respond to a request for comment or update on its enforcement work at the Coffin Butte Landfill.

Republic Services insists it's operating the landfill responsibly and addresses leaks as soon as possible, per an emailed statement from Melissa Quillard, a senior manager of external communications for the company.

Quillard said Republic does not exempt areas of the landfill to avoid reporting emissions, but said vegetation and the landfill's transitional cover, which "can become slick and unsafe for our employees and consultants tasked with collecting surface emissions data," have caused challenges.

"We are exploring solutions that will allow us to safely monitor all these areas to



Florida Research 727-441-4101

EPA announces start for cleanup of Atlanta neighborhood contaminated with lead

WSBTV.com News Staff
Tue, March 11, 2025

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced the cleanup of Atlanta's Lindsay Street Park area in the English Avenue neighborhood had started.

The northwest Atlanta community is including in the EPA's work to clean up the Westside Lead Superfund Site.

Over the next three months, the EPA will have work crews excavating up to two feet of lead-contaminated soil, dispose of it offsite, then replace the contaminated soil with clean fill and topsoil. They'll also restore the landscaping.

On the city's end of things, Atlanta will replace the park's playground equipment before it reopens.

The playground itself has been closed since 2022.

Channel 2 Action News covered in years past when the federal government started its efforts to clean up lead waste in the soil of several Atlanta neighborhoods, including Vine City and English Avenue.

The EPA proposed adding the Westside Superfund site to the Superfund National Priorities List so resources could be assigned in the long-term for cleaning up the area in 2021. It made the list in 2022, according to the federal agency.

In 2023, $1 billion in funding was allocated to clean up nearly two dozen sites with lead contamination.

"This federal-state-local partnership between EPA, the Georgia Environmental Protection Division and the City of Atlanta will get children back on the playground and residents back to enjoying their park," Administrator Kevin McOmber of EPA's Southeast Region said in a statement. "We are proud to play a role in making Lindsay Street Park safe for children."

According to the EPA, the park first opened in 2015 as the English Avenue community's first public park. It was built across six once-blighted lots with support from the community and several companies and organizations, but three years later, researchers found lead contamination, leading to the need for cleanup.

Now, the EPA says the work is underway.

PBB Revisited: EPA continues work at epicenter of Michigan chemical disaster

By Matt Jaworowski

March 9, 2025

Woodtv.com

ST. LOUIS, Mich. (WOOD) — More than 50 years after the start of **Michigan's "PBB Disaster,"** the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency remains hard at work dealing with the aftermath.

EPA crews are working to install a barrier wall at the **Velsicol Chemical Superfund site** in St. Louis to prevent contaminated soil and groundwater from flowing into the nearby Pine River.

The former Velsicol Chemical Plant in Gratiot County is the epicenter of an environmental disaster that ultimately killed millions of farm animals, financially destroyed many farmers and poisoned millions of people across the state.

A shipping mixup from the chemical company was the trigger point. In the spring of 1973, the Michigan Farm Bureau placed a bulk order for a product called Nutrimaster, a magnesium oxide mixture that is commonly added to dairy feed to help cows produce more milk.

Instead, they were sent Firemaster, a fire retardant full of **polybrominated biphenyl** (PBB) that had almost the exact same color and consistency as Nutrimaster.

But it wasn't just the batches directly mixed with Firemaster that spread the poison. The machinery used to mix the feed was also contaminated and continued to spread toxic levels of the harmful material into feed for months.

Over the next few years, more than 500 farms across Michigan had to be quarantined, and approximately 30,000 cattle, 4,500 swine, 1,500 sheep and 1.5 million chickens either died from the poisoning or had to be killed. That doesn't factor in the animals that showed clear signs of PBB toxicity but still cleared safety protocols and were allowed to be sold off and slaughtered.

People also saw major health issues. Roy and Marilyn Tacoma served as the key plaintiffs in the lawsuit against the chemical company and the Michigan Farm Bureau. She detailed some of her health issues in court. In the weeks after their animals were given tainted feed and her family ate products from their animals, Marilyn suffered from random fainting attacks, uncontrollable diarrhea and sporadic moments when she would become temporarily blind. Her children routinely complained of severe pain in their joints and feet and were extremely lethargic.

Studies found that PBB contamination was passed through the commercial chain and that virtually everyone who lived in Michigan at that time had some measurable amount of PBB within their system. And because the chemical compound is stored in fats, it was being passed on to future generations through breast milk.

Velsicol Chemical Corp. shut down in 1978 and several environmental contaminants were discovered on the site, including PBB and the pesticide **DDT** (dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane). The EPA and the state of Michigan entered an agreement in 1982 and the agency has been working on and off ever since to complete the cleanup at the site. The barrier wall is one of the final projects set for the Superfund site. Work on the barrier wall, which is set to start this month, should be done by the fall.

Tom Alcamo, the now-retired remedial project manager for the Superfund site, told News 8 in 2023 that the containment portion of the project was on track to be completed in 2026 barring major changes to funding. However, the EPA will still need to address a cap for the property as well as groundwater extraction and treatment.

Florida Research 727-441-4101

Ramona Tascoe MD: I grew up beside a Superfund landfill with only a chain link fence for protection

March 10, 2025

Sfbayview.com

Letter of support

As 2019 cofounder and medical consultant for the Hunters Point Community Biomonitoring Program, please accept my support for the Round 2 project proposal, "View From a Playground in Hunters Point: Superfund Community Exposure Research Science," building on the work of the 2021 CalEPA EJ Small Grant project "Community Window on Environmental Exposures in Bayview Hunters Point."

Bayview Hunters Point is home to 35,000 residents and workers within the one mile perimeter of a system of federal Superfund sites. The EPA ECHO Enforcement tool identifies an additional 14 properties meeting Superfund criteria for chemical contamination.

My father was one of those loyal workers. Earnest Hamilton Tascoe Jr. served his career as a trusted HVAC technician and engineer who drove his family from Louisiana to San Francisco to work for the prestigious United States Naval Radiological Defense Laboratories, headquartered in Building 815 on the southern shoreline of the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard. He died of mesothelioma, a cancer induced by exposure to asbestos – following the 1969 disestablishment of the NRDL.

"View From a Playground in Hunters Point" offers transferrable deliverables designed to protect public health, heighten emergency preparedness and strengthen enforcement of environmental regulations in EJ overburdened communities throughout the state:

As medical consultant, I will assume principal responsibility for Task 1: Biomonitoring testing and interval retesting of high risk heavily exposed residents and workers within the half mile perimeter of the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard Federal Superfund Site. In 2024 I joined Dr. Ahimsa Porter Sumchai in testing homeless RV dwellers sited on the shoreline of the Superfund system in a region the Navy documents to be heavily contaminated with radioactive and carcinogenic heavy metals.

Biomonitoring retesting of high risk residents and workers within feet of landfills and repositories known to harbor nuclear waste was first conducted in 2022 by the Hunters Point Biomonitoring Foundation. The findings document measurable worsening of detections of dangerous chemicals of concern and declines in health measures.

James Dahlgren Medical, associate of the Hunters Point Biomonitoring Foundation, conducted advanced speciated 24-hour urinary testing that detected products of nuclear fission and decay in 11 current and childhood residents, including a family of four with a 12-year-old disabled son. All were referred for expert follow-up.

The Hunters Point Community Toxic Registry converts six years of environmental health assessments and human biomonitoring into the digital creation of a secure HIPAA compliant registry of BVHP residents with risk, evidence and proof of exposure to environmental toxicants.

Protect … Detect … Prevent! The project design and feasibility of "View From a Playground in Hunters Point" is rooted in environmental justice advocacy, citizen science and a model for community exposure science transferrable to overburdened communities throughout the state … and throughout the nation.

Controversial clean-up

In "Controversial Cleanup: Superfund and the Implementation of U.S. Hazardous Waste Policy," Dianne Rahm transports us back in time to the 1970s when residents of Niagara Falls, New York's Love Canal, alerted the American public to the "ticking time bomb" of hazardous waste disposal with images of chemical slime oozing into basements of homes. Hooker Chemical Co. dumped 21,800 tons of industrial waste into Love Canal in the 1950s, covered it with clay and sold the land to the Niagara Falls Board of Education for $1. The Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (CERCLA or Superfund) became the governmental response.

Bayview Hunters Point is a heavily industrialized, heavily polluted community located in southeastern San Francisco. Decades of public health research and epidemiological surveys offer evidence of exposure to environmental toxicants. The EPA EJScreen and CalEnviroScreen rank the majority of environmental justice impacts in the 90th to 100th percentile.

The Hunters Point Naval Shipyard is the site of the Naval Radiological Defense Laboratories, a radiation contaminated industrial landfill and shoreline located feet away from homes, playgrounds, churches and transit stations. I grew up on Thomas Street within feet of the unfortified chain metal fence separating a Superfund landfill from our home.

The 2022 Report of the Civil Grand Jury offers a clarion call to the risks of rising groundwater and sea level, extreme weather events like the 2023 atmospheric storms that shuttered the Biomonitoring offices for three months, and the regional dissemination of toxins emanating from Superfund properties.

An enormous amount of collaborative work has gone into the creation of a proposal that offers a model for Superfund community exposure research science customizable for the estimated 94 federal Superfund sites in California.

"Our Nation has an abiding commitment to empower our workers and communities; promote and protect our public health and the environment; and conserve our national treasures and monuments, places that secure our national memory. Where the Federal Government has failed to meet that commitment in the past, it must advance environmental justice." – Executive Order 13990 on Protecting Public Health and the Environment and Restoring Science to Tackle the Climate Crisis, issued by the White House Jan. 20, 2021

To learn more, visit hunterspointcommunitybiomonitoring.net/ or, to reach Dr. Tascoe and the staff, contact Hunters Point Biomonitoring Foundation, Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, 150 Executive Park Boulevard, Suite 1000, San Francisco, CA 94134-3303, 415-349-4424.

Hazardous Florida gets it backward by promoting cavities and cancer

Frank Cerabino
Columnist
Palm Beach Post
USA TODAY NETWORK
March 9, 2025

In case you're keeping score, there's a move in Florida to remove cavity-fighting fluoride in the drinking water while adding radioactive industrial waste products to roads.

I know. I know. We've got it backward again. We should keep adding fluoride in the water while removing radioactive waste from road-building material.

But ... Florida. I guess you could say we're speaking up for cavities and cancer, and providing a fresh new counter-consensus voice in public health.

The Florida Department of Health, under the guidance of the fringy, anti-vax Florida Surgeon Gen. Joseph Ladapo, has taken a stand against the practice of fluoridating drinking water, something most water systems do to encourage dental health — especially among children.

The science is clear. Water fluoridation is safe and effective.

In fact, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has called the fluoridation of public drinking water, a practice that started in

See CERABINO, Page 36A

Cerabino

Continued from Page 33A

1945, one of the 10 great public health achievements of the last century.

"Community water fluoridation is a cornerstone strategy for the prevention of cavities in the U.S.," the CDC site says. "It is a practical, cost-effective, and equitable way for communities to improve their residents' oral health regardless of age, education or income."

The effects of fluoridation in the water has been dramatic, the CDC says.

"Drinking fluoridated water keeps teeth strong and reduces cavities by about 25 percent in children and adults," the CDC wrote. "This results in less mouth pain, fewer fillings or teeth pulled, and fewer missed days of work and school."

The Florida Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics echoed those views.

"Insufficient fluoride exposure can have significant negative effects on oral health," the group said in a news release.

It called cavities the "most common chronic disease in childhood" and one that particularly affects poor children who have less access to dental care.

The American Dental Association (ADA), which also supports fluoridation warns against misinformation on the issue.

"The ADA is aware there is widespread misinformation circulating online and in social media around community water fluoridation. The Association urges its members and the public to be cautious of 'pseudo-scientific information,' " the association warned.

"This information is not always based on research conducted according to impartial and evidence-based scientific methodology; and the conclusions drawn from research are not always scientifically justifiable or without bias."

I think they're talking about us.

Because it seems that we here in Florida are relying on studies that say that too much fluoride – fluoride in doses far above those in drinking water – can be harmful.

"Due to the neuropsychiatric risk associated with fluoride exposure, particularly in pregnant women and children, and the wide availability of alternative sources of fluoride for dental health, the State Surgeon General recommends against community water fluoridation," the Florida Department of Health advises.

This push against fluoridation of drinking water in Florida has now moved to the state legislature, where Republican lawmakers are backing legislation that takes the decision to fluoridate drinking water away from local communities, and outright bans it across the state.

Florida fluoride bill takes power of health decisions away from Floridians

The proposed fluoride ban is a small part of a large Florida farm bill. It has the backing of Florida Agriculture Commissioner Wilton Simpson.

Simpson called the public health practice of fluoridating drinking water "government prescribed medicine without the consent of the consumer."

The bill's sponsor in the Florida Senate, Sen. Keith Truenow, R-Tavares, said banning fluoride "ensures that individuals and families have the final say over their health."

Actually, it just takes that decision away from people on a local level – including the more than 100 public water systems in Florida today that include fluoride in the drinking water.

That number includes five systems in Palm Beach County: Delray Beach, Wellington, West Palm Beach, Palm Beach County Water Utilities and the Lake Region facility.

If this bill passes, it will, by state decree, override all local decisions to trust the advice of the country's most reliable medical institutions.

The effort to remove fluoride from drinking water comes as Florida is experimenting with adding radioactive waste to road-building materials in a pilot project to benefit one of the state's biggest polluters.

Fluoride is bad, but radioactive materials are just fine

The production of fertilizer by the Mosaic company creates a radioactive sludge called phosphogypsum, which is kept away from the public and stored in mountainous stacks. There are 25 of these stacks, which rise up to 200 feet, and contain more than a billion pounds of this waste.

For years, the fertilizer industry has sought to override environmental restrictions by finding ways to share hundreds of thousands of tons of their radioactive waste with the rest of us.

Two years ago, Gov. Ron DeSantis signed a bill that ordered the Florida Department of Transportation to do a feasibility study on adding the radioactive waste to road-building materials in Florida.

And last month, the federal Environmental Protection Agency approved a pilot project to use the radioactive waste on private roads on Mosaic's property.

Environmental groups warn that spreading tons of radioactive waste on the roads would be a health hazard to road construction crews and the people who live nearby. And that the pilot project is just the first step in making this practice widespread on public roads in the state.

Two Florida Democrats in Congress have authored a bill called "The No Radioactive Roads Act" to stop this.

Don't count on it. I'd say the smart money is on Florida doing the wrong thing in both cases.

And that Florida's future will be one with dental-health-promoting fluoride removed from the drinking water while cancer-causing radioactive sludge is added to road-building materials.

Frank Cerabino is a news columnist with The Palm Beach Post, part of the USA Today Network - Florida. He can be reached at fcerabino@gannett.com.

California regulators want to weaken hazardous waste disposal rules

Story by Tony Briscoe

March 12, 2025

Latimes.com

California environmental regulators are considering rolling back the state's hazardous waste disposal rules, potentially permitting some municipal landfills to accept more contaminated soil from heavily polluted areas.

From lead-acid battery smelters to rocket testing facilities, heavy industry over the past century in California has left large swathes of land imbued with dangerous chemicals. As a result, contaminated soil that has been removed during major environmental cleanups or new construction has typically comprised the largest bloc of hazardous waste in California each year. More than 560,000 tons of toxic dirt are excavated every year on average, according to a 2023 DTSC report.

The vast majority of this polluted soil would not qualify as hazardous waste outside of California, because the state has more stringent rules than the federal government. But now the California Department of Toxic Substances Control is recommending loosening the state's hazardous waste rules for contaminated soil, arguing that many nonhazardous landfills are adequately equipped to accept chemical-laced dirt, according to an unpublished draft plan obtained by The Times.

DTSC spokesperson Alysa Pakkidis said the agency is exploring ways to manage California-only hazardous waste "under different standards while still protecting public health and the environment," as required by a 2021 state law. The agency's recommendations will be detailed in the state's first Hazardous Waste Management Plan, a document that is intended to help guide state strategy on potentially dangerous wastes and which the 2021 law requires be published every three years.

The law called for the first version to be published by March 1. But as of March 11, it has still not been posted publicly.

The DTSC proposal comes as hazardous waste, namely in the form of soil polluted after the recent L.A. wildfires, has become top of mind. Government agencies are facing blistering criticism over their decision to allow untested — and potentially hazardous — wildfire ash and soil to be disposed of in municipal landfills across Southern California.

Environmental groups say allowing nonhazardous waste landfills to accept chemical-laced soil would be a grave mistake. By dumping more toxic substances into the landfills, there's a higher chance of chemicals leaking into groundwater or becoming part of airborne dust blowing into nearby communities.

"The reason we established these waste codes was to protect California's groundwater and public health," said Jane Williams, executive director of California Communities Against Toxics, an environmental nonprofit. "You can see how effectively [the state is] regulating landfills without the hazardous waste. We're finding vast noncompliance."

California's more rigorous hazardous waste standards have led to higher costs for industry and government, as under the current rules, contaminated soil must be transported to a specialized hazardous waste facility in California or hauled to landfills in neighboring states.

California currently has only two hazardous waste landfills: Kettleman Hills and Buttonwillow, both in San Joaquin Valley. Oftentimes, contaminated soil is taken to nonhazardous landfills in neighboring states that rely on the more lenient federal standards. The average distance driven to dispose of California-designated hazardous soil is about 440 miles, according to a DTSC draft report.

"Because there's only two and they're kind of far away from everything, it is very expensive to take material there," said Nick Lapis, director of advocacy for Californians Against Waste, a Sacramento-based environmental nonprofit. "So people are always looking for ways to not take material there, and that has sometimes resulted in people taking material out of state."

The proposed changes would in theory give private industry a larger selection of in-state landfills to which they could send their waste. DTSC argues that this would result in shorter trucking distances, less air pollution and lower costs.

But the state could also see cost savings from relaxing its policies. California has been funding the removal and replacement of soil in neighborhoods around the Exide battery plant in Southeast L.A. County — the state's most expensive cleanup. State contractors are trucking hazardous soil from that site to nonhazardous waste landfills in Utah, Nevada and Arizona — states that rely on the more lenient federal hazardous waste standards.

California currently uses three tests to determine whether solid waste is hazardous. One ensures waste doesn't exceed state-established limits for certain toxic substances when the waste is in a solid form. For example, soil with 1,000 parts per million of lead is considered toxic by the state.

The other two tests measure the concentration of toxic substances that seep out of solid waste when it is exposed to an acid. These are intended to simulate how solid waste could release chemicals inside the landfill as it's exposed to leachate — liquid waste from rainfall or decomposing garbage. One of these tests is based on federally established methods, and the other is based on the stricter California state-established standards.

DTSC recommends allowing contaminated soil that fails the state's leakage test to be dumped at nonhazardous waste landfills, so long as it passes the other two tests. They stressed that hazardous soil would be sent to landfills with liners and leachate collection systems — equipment that gathers and pumps out liquid waste that trickles to the bottom of the dump.

Environmental advocates say liner systems can fail when damaged by earthquakes or extreme heat. They argue that sending chemical-laced soil into such systems would eventually imperil groundwater near landfills and could lead to long-term contamination risks.

Residents who live near the landfills that are already accepting debris from the Eaton and Palisades wildfires say they are also worried about toxic dust.

One of these sites is the Sunshine Canyon Landfill, a 1,036-acre landfill located in a blustery mountain pass in the northeastern San Fernando Valley where gusts often blow dust and odors into nearby communities. The landfill is less than a mile away from a popular recreational area with soccer fields and baseball diamonds.

After trucks moved fire debris to the landfill, Erick Fefferman, a resident of nearby Granada Hills, decided against allowing his son to participate in a youth soccer league there this year.

"We keep hearing about liners and leachate, but we're not hearing about wind," said Erick Fefferman. "Things don't just sink down — they also get lifted up."

Contaminated soil is allowed to be used as "daily cover," a layer of material spread over municipal waste to prevent odors and pests. In a November 2024 meeting, when state officials were asked if California-only hazardous soil could be used as a cover, a DTSC representative said "it is a consideration."

California's hazardous waste laws were first established in 1972 to direct the state to regulate the handling, transportation and disposal of dangerous materials within the state. The state adopted a more rigorous classification system and regulations, including the state leakage test, in the 1980s. Though California's regulations are among the strictest in the nation, they have been loosened over time.

In 2021, for example, the state legislature adopted rules allowing for wood coated with toxic metals like chromium and arsenic to be taken to nonhazardous waste facilities.

Contaminated soil could be next. DTSC is working to identify regulatory or statutory avenues that would allow for soil that could be contaminated with heavy metals to be dumped at California landfills. To do so, the agency will need the cooperation of the state Water Resources Board and CalRecycle, which regulate nonhazardous waste landfills. Landfill owners would also need to volunteer to accept contaminated soil, according to the DTSC draft plan.

The Board of Environmental Safety, a five-member committee that provides oversight of DTSC, will host a series of public meetings on the state's hazardous waste plan. The board is scheduled to vote on whether to approve the plan in July.

Environmental advocates say the plans will likely face stiff opposition.

"If we need more disposal capacity, maybe we should be requiring everybody to have the same standards as a hazardous waste landfill," said Lapis, the advocacy director for Californians Against Waste. "Deregulation is not the right solution, the fact that they're even proposing it is kind of crazy to me."

In Florida, State Rules Concentrate Toxic Smoke in Underserved Communities

Growing research suggests that “black snow,” a byproduct of the sugarcane harvest, is harming residents’ health. The politically powerful sugar growers say the air quality meets standards.

By Amy Green

March 10, 2025

PAUL HORN / Inside Climate News

BELLE GLADE, Fla.—Of all the cane sugar produced in the United States, half of it originates in a remote area of Florida’s heartland, where from fall to spring the fires burn.

The region south of Lake Okeechobee, the state’s largest lake, is among the nation’s most bountiful, raising rice, sod, vegetables such as lettuce, celery and corn and most notably sugarcane, making Florida the country’s top producer of the crop.

The cane is harvested through a process that begins with fire.

Whole fields are set ablaze with the purpose of incinerating the grassy leaves that sprout from the bamboo-like stalks, which themselves are full of water and do not burn. The fires concentrate the sugar content within the stalks through evaporation, while emitting large plumes of smoke that rain black ash across three counties. Residents call the ash “black snow.”

A growing body of research indicates the smoke and ash are poisoning the people, predominantly low-income people of color, who live and work among the cane fields.

By one estimate nearly 40 percent of the residents in Belle Glade, where the motto is “Her Soil is Her Fortune,” live in poverty. State restrictions, implemented in 1991 after a deluge of complaints from the wealthier suburbs of Palm Beach, home to Mar-a-Lago, prohibit the burns when the winds blow east in their direction. As a result, the smoke has been concentrated within the region known as the Everglades Agricultural Area ever since. For decades complaints from residents here have gone ignored.

In Los Angeles people wore masks as this winter’s wildfires engulfed their city to guard against the toxic air, but few here take that precaution. Because here the fires are a way of life.

“It’s your typical case of environmental injustice,” said Christine Louis-Jeune, a 22-year-old Florida A&M University student who was born and raised in Belle Glade.

One study that examined the region’s air quality found the fires and smoke were responsible for a hot spot of $PM_{2.5}$, pollution composed of particles 30 times smaller than the width of a human hair, tiny enough to penetrate deep within the lungs. The study concluded that in south Florida the pollution can lead to some 2.5 deaths annually and estimated that within the Everglades Agricultural Area, the mortality rate was 10 times higher than that in the nearby coastal cities.

“Anything that adds fine particles to the atmosphere is likely to cause an increase in mortality,” said Christopher Holmes, associate professor of earth, ocean and atmospheric science at Florida State University and a co-author of the study.

$PM_{2.5}$ pollution is linked with lung and other cancers, cardiopulmonary disease and premature death. In the Everglades Agricultural Area the crop burn emissions are comparable with those of all the vehicles in the state, if the vehicles were concentrated here, the study said. Florida’s $PM_{2.5}$ emissions from crop fires are the highest of any state, primarily because of the fires in this region. Some 18 percent of Florida’s residents live in counties with significant crop burning.

“This is America, and we should be living the American dream here, of being able to have a quality of life that our children’s children children want,” said Colin Walkes, 52, a former mayor of Pahokee who grew up in the area and with his wife raised his family here. “We don’t have that now. Our children don’t want this. They don’t want to be here.”

“We Don’t Believe We Have to Die”

Florida’s sugar industry maintains the air quality in the Everglades Agricultural Area meets Environmental Protection Agency standards.

One recent report from U.S. Sugar, a company responsible for nearly 10 percent of all the sugar produced in the country, cited data from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and Florida Department of Health, based on monitoring stations in Belle Glade, Royal Palm Beach and Delray Beach. The report said the company was partnering with Tuskegee University and Florida A&M University, both historically Black schools, to produce a more thorough environmental study and economic analysis on the region, to address community concerns.

"Florida's sugarcane growers are careful stewards of the land, air and water resources," reads a statement the Florida Sugarcane Farmers, an industry group, provided to Inside Climate News. "Locally, prescribed pre-harvest sugarcane burning helps ensure worker safety and reduces the risk of uncontrolled wildfires. The process is heavily permitted and monitored by the state and industry, which has for years provided public reporting showing our farming area has among the best air quality in the state of Florida."

Nonetheless a series of stories published in 2021 by ProPublica and The Palm Beach Post revealed that for several years the monitoring station in Belle Glade had been malfunctioning. The state Department of Environmental Protection, in a statement to Inside Climate News, characterized the monitor as a "non-regulatory instrument" that provided real-time data but was not used for regulatory determinations. The department said it has since been replaced with a regulatory monitor, and that the air quality in the region meets standards. Royal Palm Beach and Delray Beach are east of the Everglades Agricultural Area and protected from the burns when the winds blow in their direction.

"Florida has one of the nation's most comprehensive air quality monitoring networks, designed to provide the public with accurate data, and it meets or exceeds federal requirements under the Clean Air Act," according to the department's statement.

The news stories also showed that the federal and state regulatory framework for measuring the pollution failed to capture the full impact of the crop fires, because the framework was based on 24-hour and annual averages, even though the crop fires lasted only for short durations of 30 minutes or less. The reporting, including an analysis of data collected by multiple sensors the news organizations deployed in the region, found repeated spikes in $PM_{2.5}$ coinciding with the burns. Reporters also found that hospitalizations and emergency room visits for respiratory illnesses escalated in Belle Glade during the burn season.

"Yes, the air quality is certainly not as impaired as in some other major cities," said Holmes of the pollution in the region.

Sugarcane is harvested in the Everglades Agricultural Area through a process that begins with fire, creating large plumes of smoke. Credit: Amy Green/Inside Climate News

"However there are enough fine particles that we expect there to be some harmful health effects, including deaths."

A separate study found that nationwide, people of color were disproportionately exposed to $PM_{2.5}$ and characterized the pollution as the largest environmental cause of human mortality.

The Biden administration announced last year it would strengthen the ambient air quality standards for $PM_{2.5}$ and said the new standards would prevent up to 4,500 premature deaths and 290,000 lost workdays. The EPA also said the monitoring network for measuring the pollution would be modified to account for the disparities along racial lines. Challenges are expected under the new Trump administration, said Elizabeth Bechard, public health manager at Moms Clean Air Force, an advocacy group focused on air quality and climate change.

"We know that wildfire smoke is getting worse, and to me I think that underlines the importance of controlling the sources of $PM_{2.5}$ that we can control," she said. "We aren't going to be able to control all the sources, but where we can address public health we should."

In the Everglades Agricultural Area the fires emit other pollutants such as benzene and formaldehyde, which are linked with leukemia and cancers of the nose and throat, according to separate research commissioned by the Sierra Club, an environmental advocacy group that has been particularly active on the issue. The research noted crop burning in general is a known contributor to surface ozone and regional haze events. Surface ozone can trigger asthma attacks, worsen emphysema and contribute to other respiratory problems, the research said.

Crop burns are also a source of black carbon, a component of $PM_{2.5}$ and short-lived climate pollutant that has a significantly more potent warming effect than carbon dioxide. In the Everglades Agricultural Area, sugarcane production accounts for outsized greenhouse gas emissions, although the vast majority of the emissions are related to drainage and soil oxidation and loss, according to a separate study commissioned by the Everglades Foundation, an advocacy group. That study found the crop fires were responsible for only a small portion of the emissions, which are warming the global climate and leading to hotter temperatures, rising seas and more damaging hurricanes.

The residents of the Everglades Agricultural Area have found little recourse for their plight. A federal class-action lawsuit filed in 2019 on their behalf was dropped three years later after the Legislature changed the state law to protect the politically powerful sugar industry from legal challenges over air pollution. The lawsuit claimed the fires and smoke not only exposed people here to multiple pollutants, they also contaminated their properties. The litigation called for the court to stop the burns and initiate a medical monitoring program funded by the industry.

A separate petition filed in 2023 by the Sierra Club called on the Biden administration to investigate whether the fires constituted a violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, because of the Florida Forest Service's practice of authorizing the burns based on whether the winds would blow toward the underserved communities of the Everglades Agricultural Area or more affluent suburbs of Palm Beach. The petition never elicited a response, said Patrick Ferguson, senior organizing representative for the Sierra Club's Stop the Burn Campaign. The Florida Forest Service said no one was available to comment; the state Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services did not respond to multiple requests for comment.

"It's not that we hate the sugar industry. We don't want to close the sugar industry down," said Kina Phillips, 50, a former nurse who has lived in South Bay all her life and raised a family here. "Our families need the jobs of the sugar industry. But we don't believe we have to die in order for you to be here. We shouldn't have to suffer physically, emotionally, financially."

A Way of Life

When the fires burn and smoke and ash are in the air people stay indoors.

During the mildest months of the year in Florida they bring in their children from the playgrounds, shut their windows and run their air conditioners to circulate the air inside their homes, while the dark plumes rise from the vast green fields and drift for miles among their schools and homes and businesses, which are thinly scattered among the fields.

Louis-Jeune, the Florida A&M University student, grew up with eight siblings in a four-bedroom house. She passed the time indoors playing video games, watching television and doing chores.

"I have a big family. I can't stay bored," she said. "There are too many of us to be bored."

Ras Benjahman, 78, can feel the heat of the fires inside his house, and parts of its exterior have melted. One day Walkes, the former Pahokee mayor, and his family left home for the day without closing the windows. When they returned the house was full of soot.

"The smoke just billowed into our home," he said, "so when you came home the cabinets, the curtains, the furniture everything was full of smoke, soot and small particulate."

Luz Torres panicked when, as a child, she saw the fires for the first time, having recently moved to the area with her family. She wondered where the firefighters were.

"I remember our little elementary school in Canal Point, looking out the window and seeing the field on fire," said Torres, 40, who lives in Pahokee with her two children, ages 11 and 8. "I'll never forget touching the glass and feeling the heat."

Now as an adult she hardly would notice the burns except for the chronic asthma symptoms her youngest son has suffered since he was 3. The fires seem to aggravate his breathing problems, and every morning she administers his medicine. Sometimes he uses a nebulizer.

"I feel kind of, like, helpless," she said. "What am I to do?"

Some people with chronic symptoms have been advised by doctors that the best remedy would be moving away, but that isn't always easy. Al'Licia Pittman was raised in the region by a single mom. She has suffered respiratory problems and sinus infections since she was young.

"We were often told that the long-term solution was to move and try to find another area," said Pittman, 27, who now lives in South Bay.

Others watch with anguish as their children suffer. Walkes' 18-year-old son plays baseball, runs track and is a drummer in the school band but is lethargic when his asthma symptoms flare.

"This environment is pretty bad out here," said Walkes, who himself experiences constant itching. "You're attacked with so much."

Pittman, a former teacher, recalled that some of her students would throw tantrums when respiratory symptoms kept them indoors during recess. The fires were visible through the classroom windows, and some of the children talked of becoming firefighters when they grew up. Wildlife such as snakes and rabbits, even alligators, would flee the flames.

Raising complaints has proven complicated in these communities, where the sugar industry provides an overwhelming number of jobs and also assists the local schools and health care facilities. The industry contributes $4.7 billion annually to the state's economy and is responsible for some 19,201 jobs, according to an economic analysis by Texas A&M University provided to Inside Climate News by the industry. Some residents have found a platform with the Sierra Club, which operates a modest office in Belle Glade and itself has faced backlash from the industry.

"People that you were once close with, they pull away from you," said Phillips, the former nurse, who got involved after noticing her patients suffered more respiratory symptoms during the burn season. Her 11-year-old grandson has used a nebulizer since he was an infant.

"Even though I have a voice I have no voice," said Walkes, who was voted out of office after he said the sugar industry branded him a job-killing mayor. Family, friends and neighbors also have distanced themselves, he said. "That was the end of Colin Walkes as a local elected official."

He continued: "The industry has oppressed and suppressed this area so much people just don't want to speak up. … For me it's frustrating as hell. You're always lonely because no one wants to have the conversation. No one wants to organize around anything that can possibly help us to better our area and have a better quality of life."

Steve LaPorte hopes that applying enough pressure will persuade regulators to adjust the burns, in the same way the complaints of the more affluent residents to the east did more than 30 years ago. He maintains a daily diary of the fires and file folders of his many emails with the state and local departments about the blazes. His biggest gripe is one shared by many residents here, that there is no communication about when and where the burns will occur.

"It's impacting my property. There are people who are protected. I'm not one of them, and I'm not going to stop until I am," said LaPorte, 60, who lives with his wife in Moore Haven. "How does one man's right to burn allow him to trash hundreds if not thousands of people's property worth millions of dollars? That is one unanswered question that I have a right to know."

Torres said city commissioners were silent when she tried bringing up the issue at one meeting.

"It makes me sad," she said. "I think that's probably what hurts the most, they kind of ignoring it. And I guess they feel like not enough people are complaining. When enough people stand up and speak up I guess they have no other option but to look at an alternative."

"How does one man's right to burn allow him to trash hundreds if not thousands of people's property worth millions of dollars? That is one unanswered question that I have a right to know."

— Steve LaPorte

Phillips tries not to let those who have distanced themselves bother her.

"I wish they understood that they have a voice, and that it's OK to stand against injustice," she said. "There is power in that. There is beauty in that, to dare to be different. To dare to have a voice, to not be intimidated."

Polluting the Water and Air

The cane is derived from the rich organic soil—some call it muck, others black gold—that accumulated over thousands of years south of Lake Okeechobee. Watered by ample rains the lake, then a mere shallow depression in the land, spilled beyond its southern shore, giving life to a vast watershed unlike any other, the Everglades.

The water coursed here among marsh vegetation that flourished and died in an endless cycle, the plant remains falling beneath the gentle current to form a fertile soil. Eventually the soil, along with subtropical climate and abundance of water, sparked the interest of farmers, who as far back as the 1880s began digging canals to drain the water and expose the soil for planting.

Florida's sugar industry long has served as a sweet villain in the story of the delicate Everglades, even as urban centers from Orlando to Miami exert their own pressures and a massive U.S. Army Corps of Engineers effort during the last century to drain the river of grass made modern Florida possible and pushed the ecosystem to the brink. The watershed represents the state's most important freshwater resource. A $23 billion restoration effort is among the most ambitious of its kind in human history.

The water once spanned much of the peninsula. Today some 2,200 miles of canals, 2,100 miles of levees and berms, 84 pump stations and 778 water control structures sustain the river of grass, which has been reduced to a fraction of its former self. The watershed begins in central Florida with the headwaters of the Kissimmee River and includes Lake Okeechobee, sawgrass marshes to the south and Florida Bay, at the peninsula's southernmost tip.

The changes also made way for some 400,000 acres of sugarcane at a critical point where the river of grass once flowed and introduced nutrients in the sensitive watershed. In 1988 the federal government singled out the farmers, whose nutrient-rich fertilizers were polluting protected areas of the Everglades, in a lawsuit against the state. The litigation led in 1994 to the Everglades Forever Act, which initiated a large effort to address the pollution. The state effort is separate from a larger federal restoration plan then-President Bill Clinton implemented in 2000.

The sugar growers' nutrient pollution is but one aspect of the watershed's degradation, but their resistance through the years to various means of tackling the problem has sparked friction with other stakeholders in the massive federal and state effort to save the Everglades. The sugar companies have characterized some of the costs as an existential threat to their business, even as they profit from a federal price support system that boosts the price of sugar. The industry maintains its influence as one of the most generous special interest groups in agribusiness, with Florida Crystals Corp. giving nearly $3 million to federal campaigns during the 2024 election cycle and U.S. Sugar contributing more than $761,000.

Today the state has invested some $2 billion toward addressing the farmers' pollution, by constructing vast engineered wetlands designed to replicate the natural filtering ability of the Everglades. For their part, the farmers have implemented so-called best-management practices that include measures such as altering fertilizer techniques, controlling soil erosion and increasing onsite water retention. The pollution has declined at a rate that is more than double than mandated by state law, according to the South Florida Water Management District. At least 90 percent of the Everglades' water now meets the state standard.

Now the sugar growers are accused of contaminating the air where they farm and at least to some residents here seem to be resisting efforts to address the problem. The industry says the burns enhance harvest efficiency and make way for healthier subsequent crops. The companies say without the burns the leaf material lingering on the stalks would create bulk that would require additional rail cars for transport to the mills, causing more greenhouse gas emissions. They also say leaf trash left in the fields can hinder the regrowth of roots and stalks for the next harvest.

"We know these burns are the most egregious example of environmental injustice in Florida," said Eve Samples, executive director of Friends of the Everglades, an advocacy group. "The only reason it continues in Florida is because the sugar lobby is so powerful that it has made its profits a greater priority to our state policy makers than the health and wellbeing of people who live near these burns."

Other sugarcane-growing countries have moved away from burning and embraced what proponents in Florida call "green harvesting," where the leafy residue of the harvest is left on the soil as mulch. The now-defunct class-action lawsuit on behalf of residents in the Everglades Agricultural Area said farmers in Florida already harvest without burning when their burn permit applications are denied. The industry said the cane sometimes is harvested without burning when the smoke would disrupt sensitive places like a hospital, school or highway, but that the crop fires provide additional benefits like controlling snakes and insects.

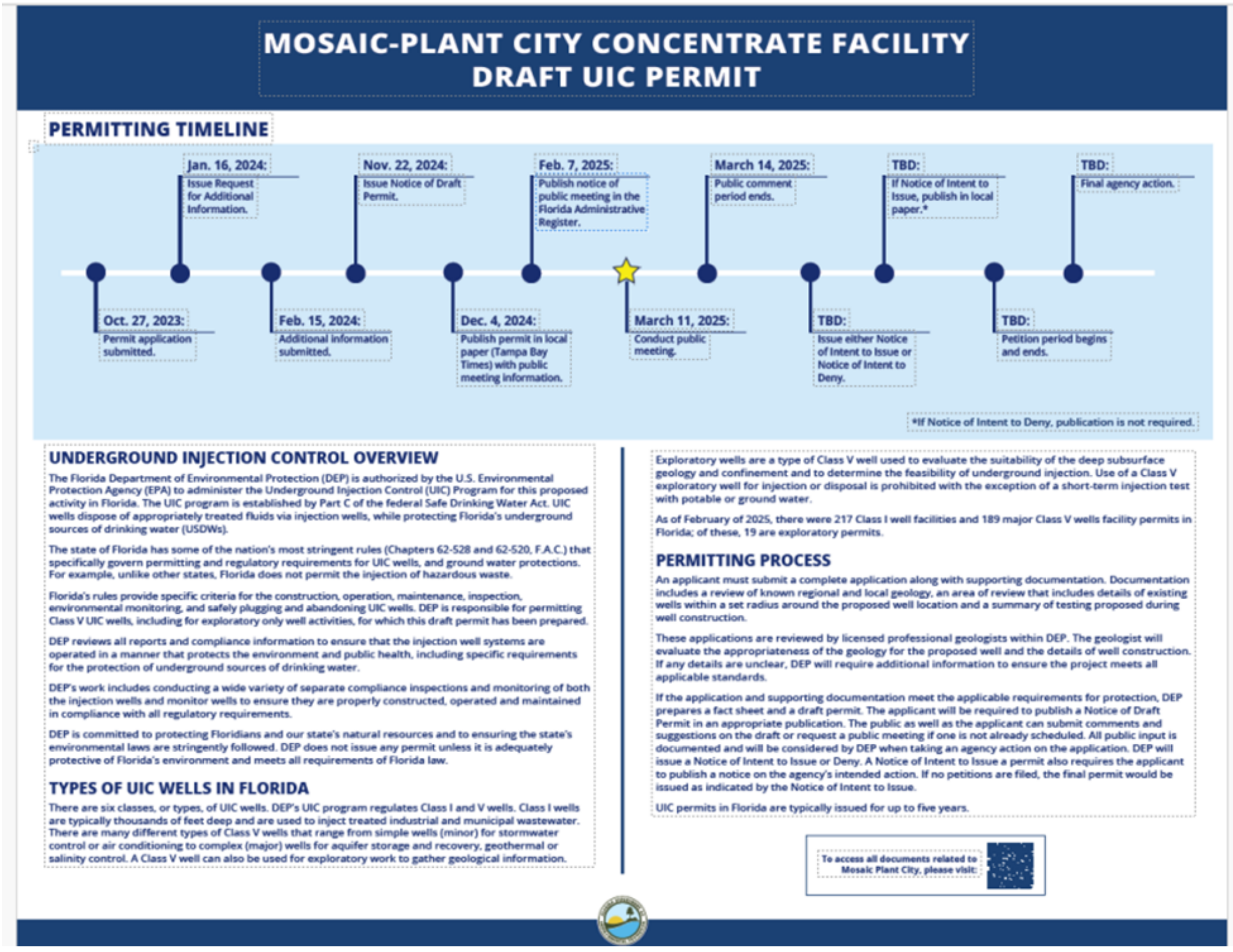
Nonetheless, in response to community concerns the industry is experimenting with green harvesting, said Rick Roth, president of Roth Farms, a midsized operation with several thousand acres raising vegetables, rice and sugarcane. He also said the industry could look more into improving communication with residents about the fires.

"We've been experimenting with it for several years, and the percentage is going up," said Roth of the green harvesting. He lives in Wellington, to the east of the Everglades Agricultural Area, and occasionally finds soot in his pool. "It's a nuisance, and we understand that as an industry, and that is why we're working on it."

There is uncertainty for the region's future. Draining the water here and exposing the soil has led to subsidence or land loss, as the plant remains combine with oxygen and the organic material breaks down. In some places more than nine feet of elevation is gone, according to one study, forcing the need to prop up some structures on stilts and raising concerns about how sustainable farming is here. Environmental groups want some of the land for Everglades restoration. Residents also worry about the sugar companies selling out to real estate developers.

"I want us to not be fearful, and I want us to just stand up and have a voice for what is right," said Phillips, a warm woman with cascading waves of hair and a warm smile. "We don't have an enemy in this. We just want change."

Questions remain as Mosaic looks into pumping phosphate wastewater deep underground



Florida Department of Environmental Protection

WUSF | By Steve Newborn

Published March 13, 2025 at 5:20 AM EDT

Wusf.org

A public hearing was held Tuesday night on an "exploratory" well at an idled Mosaic processing plant north of Plant City. But it is unknown what exactly would eventually be sent underground.

Mosaic, Florida's largest phosphate mining company, wants to inject wastewater from fertilizer production 8,000 feet deep underground in Plant City.

But questions remain about what exactly this will entail.

At a public hearing, several people peppered state environmental regulators, who say this is only a permit for an exploratory well.

One of those was Steve Connors, who lives in south Plant City. He said regulators could not tell him what would eventually be pumped underground.

"I'm not saying that this is not something that might work out and be good, but why aren't you being more open to let us know what it is you want to put down there and what was your other option before this," Connors questioned. "If you couldn't do this well, what was the option — because at the current Mosaic plant, they have a way that they heat the water, it evaporates, and then they have whatever solids are left they can get rid of. Why aren't we doing that? Is it too expensive, not profitable? These are the questions that need to be answered."

State environmental officials say they would determine what could be pumped underground after this exploratory well is approved.

Timeline of the permitting process

Department of Environmental Protection spokeswoman Alexandra Kuchta said this would strictly be to authorize an exploratory well to determine the makeup of the underground geology and clay confining layers. It would not authorize any pumping of wastewater — that would be determined at a future public hearing.

"How these wells are constructed is not only to be protective of the environment, but also your underground sources of drinking water," Kuchta said. "But the first step is you have to understand what the subsurface geology is and so that is you start with the exploratory well."

David Brown, a professional geologist who is a consultant for Mosaic, said the company's ultimate goal is to drain the gypstacks at Mosaic's Plant City processing plant, which has sat idle since 2017.

Gypstacks contain process water from the production of fertilizer and are highly acidic and slightly radioactive.

Brown said if this exploratory well is approved, the company would have to file for another permit to inject treated wastewater underground.

Florida Research 727-441-4101

"You have to prove up the viability at that location. So every well that you put in — specifically at this depth — has unique geologic characteristics and so you have to basically prove up the mineralogy and the properties of the rocks and the inherent water quality at that depth to see if it's even viable," Brown said.

By "viable," Brown said that means that any waste injected at that depth would not be able to percolate upward and contaminate the drinking water aquifer.

"The water at that depth that we're going to is so much saltier than the Gulf of Mexico and saltier than the Dead Sea," Brown said. "If there was the ability for that water to exchange, it would be doing it right now, and it's not. Those aquifers are separated by those confining units."

That didn't sit well with Connors, who's worried about possible contamination of the area's water supply.

"I want to know what's currently in the ponds now," Connors said during the public hearing. "Their response was, oh, they don't really know what they're going to put down there. That makes no sense from a business standpoint. If you're a corporation, they obviously want to do this to save money to increase their profit, which is fine, but let us know what it is you're going to put down there."

The day before the public hearing, a consortium of environmental groups sued the federal Environmental Protection Agency in a move that could throw a monkey wrench into these plans.

The lawsuit aims to close a loophole in federal law enacted in 1991 that exempts phosphoric acid production wastes from federal hazardous waste regulations.

Rachael Curran, an attorney with the Public Interest Law Clinic at Stetson Law School, said it would force the EPA to make mining companies further treat their wastewater.

"So the only reason that (deep wastewater injection) is even being considered as an option is because of this exemption and the fact that we're able to call it nonhazardous industrial waste," she said.

Curran said that reclassifying phosphate wastewater as hazardous waste would also affect Mosaic's request to inject wastewater deep underground.

Mosaic is also applying for permits to send waste underground at its fertilizer processing plants in Riverview, Mulberry and Bartow, in Polk County.

The state is accepting public comments on the exploratory well until the end of Friday. Comments can be sent by email to app@dep.state.fl.us.

More information on the draft permit may be obtained by contacting Richard Lobinske, DEP Drinking Water and Aquifer Protection Program, by U.S. mail at 2600 Blair Stone Road, MS 3530, Tallahassee, FL, 32399-2400, by phone at 850-245-8655.

Environmental groups sue Trump administration over deregulation of toxic waste

POSTED ON MARCH 11, 2025 • BY JOSH HOLTON

WMNF.ORG

More than half a dozen conservation and environmental organizations have sued the Trump administration. They say the federal government has failed to respond to requests for better oversight of toxic waste from fertilized production and phosphate mining.

In 1991 the EPA exempted phosphoric acid waste byproducts from federal hazardous waste regulations. Ragan Whitlock is a staff attorney from the Center for Biological Diversity, a plaintiff in the suit. Whitlock said this decision put corporate greed over public health and safety.

“The EPA passed this regulation back decades ago, and it has done nothing to protect human health and safety in the interim. It’s time for them to address these problems moving forward instead of sitting and waiting for the regular for the regulated industry to do it themselves.”

Whitlock said multi-billion dollar phosphate companies like Mosaic have sought for years to deregulate themselves by pushing elected officials and regulators to change the rules.

“Whether now it’s the idea of paving it into roadways or injecting it into underground injection wells in Florida’s delicate soils, the industry is seeking to find a way to make more money. That’s the point of a Fortune 500 company. But the job of the EPA and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection is not to cater to the industry’s whims; it’s to protect human health and safety and the environment- and in doing that, they have failed.”

The EPA has found that phosphogypsum byproducts contain radioactive materials, as well as heavy metals like arsenic, cadmium which cause cancer in humans. Other plaintiffs in the suit include Healthy Gulf, Manasota-88, the Sierra Club, and more. For WMNF News, I’m Josh Holton

Florida Research 727-441-4101

We got rid of acid rain. Now something scarier is falling from the sky.

Here's why you should never, ever drink the rain.

by Benji Jones

Mar 10, 2025, 6:00 AM EDT

Vox.com

In the 1970s, acid rain was one of the most serious environmental threats in North America and Europe. The air was so laden with pollution from coal power plants and cars at the time that it turned the rain toxic. Downpours killed fish, destroyed forests, eroded statues, and damaged buildings, sparking public outcry.

"Acid rain is a particularly alarming demonstration of the simple adage that what goes up must come down," former Colorado Sen. Gary Hart said in 1979. "With acid rain," he said, "what comes down is much worse than what went up — worse in its potential damage to trees and crops, worse in its potential damage to freshwater lakes and fish and tourism."

A few decades later, acid rain had largely disappeared.

Beginning around 1990, the US and Europe passed legislation that limited the amount of acid-forming pollutants — such as sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides — that power plants could emit. Laws requiring car manufacturers to put catalytic converters into new vehicles, which reduced harmful emissions, were also taking effect. That brings us to today: While precipitation in some regions is still unnaturally acidic, on the whole, acid rain is largely a problem of the past and a major environmental success story.

Now, however, there's another problem with our rain — and it's even more alarming.

While precipitation has become less acidic, a growing body of evidence suggests that it's now full of many other pollutants that pose a risk to public health, including microplastics. And unlike the compounds that cause acid rain, these pollutants are almost impossible to get rid of.

The new pollutants in our rain

As government regulators focused on reigning in air pollution, companies were busy generating new sources of pollution, including plastics and PFAS, the so-called forever chemicals. PFAS, which stands for perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances, are a large group of compounds used, among other things, to make fabric stain-resistant and pans nonstick.

Over time, these modern-era substances — which famously take decades to millennia to degrade — have leached into the environment, reaching every corner of the planet, no matter how tall or deep. Microplastics, PFAS, and some other compounds, such as pesticides, are now so widespread that they've essentially become part of our biome, not unlike bacteria or fungi.

They're so common, in fact, that they're even found in the rain.

A number of studies, for example, have documented microplastics in rain falling all over the world — even in remote, unpopulated regions. For one 2020 analysis in the journal *Science,* researchers documented microplastics in rainwater that fell on several national parks and wilderness areas in the Western US. Most of the plastic bits were microfibers, such as those shed from polyester sweaters or carpeting on the floor of a car. The researchers estimated that more than 1,000 metric tons of plastic from the atmosphere fall on parks in the West each year, including both as rainfall and as dry dust. That's equivalent to roughly 120 to 300 million plastic water bottles, according to the study.

The largest source of those microplastics was highways, said Janice Brahney, a biogeochemist at Utah State University who led the *Science* study. Roads are often littered with plastic waste that gets broken down by cars and kicked up into the air. Those particles are typically lighter than soil, so once they become airborne, they can easily move around in the atmosphere and get grabbed by rain as it falls.

Another important source of plastic rain is the ocean, Brahney said. Several million tons of plastic enter the ocean each year, much of which breaks down into microplastics. When waves crash on the beach or bubbles burst on the sea surface, it sends microscopic plastic particles into the air.

Plastic rain is an environmental threat that's harder to fix than the last one. "It's much worse than the acid rain problem," Brahney said. "With acid rain, we could stop emitting acid precursors and then acid rain would stop falling. But we can't stop the microplastic cycle anymore. It's there and it's not going away."

The story of PFAS is similarly bleak: Researchers have detected these chemicals in rain across the planet from the US and Sweden to China and even Antarctica, often at levels above drinking water guidelines. For a study published in 2024 — titled "It's raining PFAS in South Florida" — researchers analyzed rainwater that fell around Miami and found more than 20 PFAS compounds, including PFOS and PFOA. Although these two PFAS were phased out in the US years ago due to public health concerns, the researchers still found them at concentrations beyond government health advisory levels for drinking water, underscoring the remarkable persistence of forever chemicals.

For another article, published in 2022, scientists reviewed studies of PFAS in rainwater and similarly found concentrations of these chemicals at levels above what US and Danish regulators say is safe for drinking water. The authors concluded that, based on health advisories, no untreated rainwater would be considered safe to drink.

"For us to get rid of PFAS, we probably have to go back in time," said Natalia Soares Quinete, a chemist at Florida International University who was involved in the 2024 study. Even though the government is increasingly regulating PFAS, she said, "I don't see us completely getting rid of those chemicals."

Is the rain dangerous?

The good news is that most people — especially in wealthy countries like the US — don't rely on untreated rainwater. What is concerning is that rain ends up in groundwater, rivers, and reservoirs that feed into municipal water systems.

Treatment plants help a lot, typically removing upward of 70 percent of microplastics in water, but some still pass through. A study published earlier this year, for example, found a small amount of microplastics in bottled water and tap water in France. Similarly, typical filtration plants for municipal water remove some but not all PFAS. Authors of a 2023 study by the US Geological Survey, a federal agency, estimate that at least 45 percent of the country's tap water has at least one type of PFAS present.

Treatment facilities don't have the technology to treat all of the microplastic compounds, let alone the technology to measure them, Brahney said. "There are tens of thousands of chemicals involved, and we only understand a fraction of them," she said.

Whether or not you're at risk from microplastics, PFAS, and other chemicals is all about exposure — how much of those substances you're breathing in or consuming. There's not much of them in a single glass of tap or a bottle of water. The problem is that there are many other pathways that these pollutants can take to enter your body, such as through food. And over time they add up.

How to protect yourself from polluted rain

Avoid drinking untreated rainwater and eating snow, no matter how pristine it looks! If you can afford to filter your water, you should.

Standard filters like reverse osmosis — which runs water through a semi-permeable membrane — typically remove a large portion of microplastics and PFAS.

Some countertop pitcher filters also remove at least some PFAS (e.g., Zero Water) and microplastics (e.g., LifeStraw), though they vary a lot. Consumer Reports also has a great guide to getting PFAS out of your water.

Opt for tap over bottled water to avoid ingesting microplastics. Tap water is also way better for the planet.

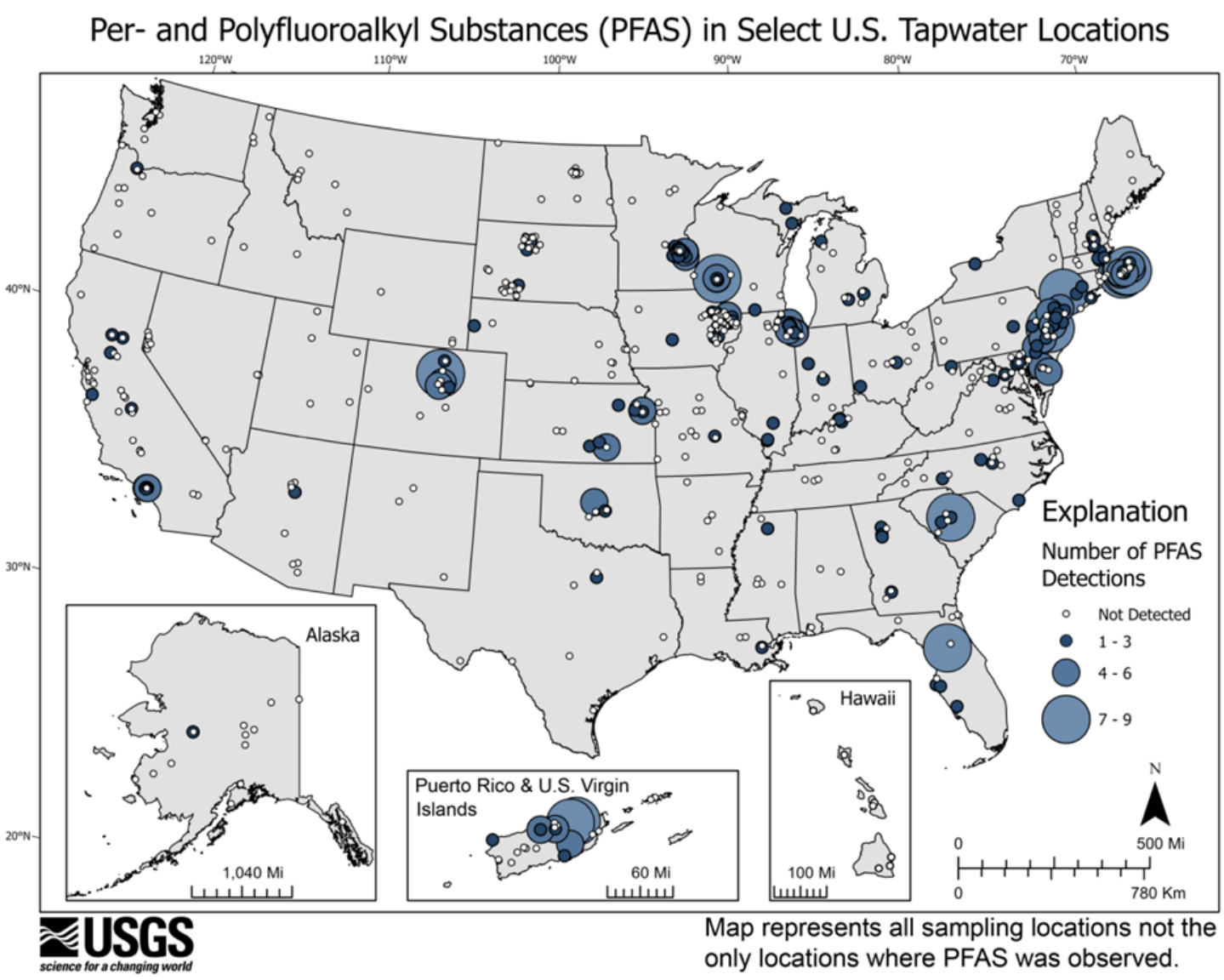
A recent study found that the human brains contain as much as a typical plastic spoon's worth of microplastic, by weight. Scientists still don't understand what impact that might have on human health, but they suspect that microplastics could be linked to cancer, heart and kidney disease, and Alzheimer's.

Meanwhile, nearly all Americans have a measurable amount of PFAS in their blood, according to US health officials, though concentrations of some of them — including PFOA and PFOS — are declining. On the whole, forever chemicals are associated with a range of ailments including increased cholesterol, decreases in birth weight, and kidney cancer.

All of these contaminants can also be harmful to wildlife, which unlike most of us, do rely on untreated water. One study, for example, linked exposure to PFAS to impaired immune systems in alligators. "If we have these contaminants in our rainwater they're getting into our groundwater," Brahney said. "They're infiltrating our soils. Every organism is interacting with rainwater."

Ultimately, what all of this research reveals is that the planet is dirty, even if the filth can be hard to see. These chemicals are in the rain because they're abundant in the environment — and they're in the environment because they're in the rain. And while there's ongoing research, we don't yet fully understand how those pollutants impact our bodies and our ecosystems. We just know they'll be around for a very, very long time.

"To be honest, I cry, because there's no walking this back," Brahney said of microplastic pollution. "These particles don't break down at a time scale that would be relevant. So yeah, we're not escaping that."



Savannah sues 3M, DuPont over alleged PFAS contamination

City officials also accused manufacturers Mohawk Industries of using forever chemicals and contaminating local water resources.

Published March 12, 2025

Sara Samora, Reporter

Manufacturingdive.com

Dive Brief:

Savannah, Georgia, sued several manufacturers, 3M and DuPont de Nemours, as well as International Paper and carpet maker Mohawk Industries, for allegedly contaminating city water with PFAS, according to court documents filed last month.

- City officials accused the companies of improperly disposing of waste contaminated with forever chemicals and failing to warn residents of PFAS' possible harm.

The city is seeking monetary relief for punitive damages, attorney costs and past and future damages, as well as out-of-pocket expenses.

The lawsuit noted that the case originated from the manufacturing, supply, use and disposal of PFAS across numerous industries, including carpet, textile, paper and metal finishing and fabricating.

"The same chemical properties that make PFAS so valuable to these industries are also what makes PFAS dangerous," Savannah city officials said in the court filings.

Savannah residents get their water from Abercorn Creek, which is distributed through a delta system from the Savannah River. The Savannah River Basin is located in eastern Georgia and western South Carolina and serves as a boundary between the two Southern states, according to environmental advocacy group Georgia Rivers.

The suit alleges that chemical manufacturers and users operating or have operated facilities in the Savannah metro area or South Carolina allegedly discharged PFAS-laden industrial wastewater into Abercorn Creek. The hazardous waste then allegedly entered wastewater treatment plants or landfills that are incapable of removing the forever chemicals, according to the court filings.

Savannah is the latest Georgia city to file a lawsuit against companies like 3M, Daikin America and The Chemours Co., which have been known to develop, produce and use forever chemicals in their manufacturing. Mohawk Industries has also been named and included in multiple lawsuits with the chemical titans for using PFAS in its manufacturing processes.

As a result of these lawsuits, Mohawk sued 3M, EIDP, Chemours and Daikin America in a Georgia state court in November 2024. The carpet maker accused the chemical giants of concealing the risks of PFAS when 3M began selling the toxic substances in the 1970s.

Georgia is home to many carpet manufacturers, including Mohawk, and the northwestern city of Dalton is called the "Carpet Capital of the World," according to the Chattanooga Area Chamber.

The list of lawsuits against Mohawk and its subsidiaries in the Georgia area continues to grow. The costly issue led Georgia lawmakers to introduce in late January a bill that would protect companies that use or receive PFAS, but do not manufacture forever chemicals themselves. Dubbed the "PFAS Receiver Shield Act," the legislation would provide forever chemical users and receivers immunity from hazardous substances-based lawsuits.

PUBLIC NOTICE OF INTENT TO ISSUE AIR PERMIT
Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Northwest District Office
Draft Air Construction Permit No. 0330040-080-AC
Ascend Performance Materials Operations LLC, Pensacola Plant
Escambia County, Florida

Applicant: The applicant for this project is Ascend Performance Materials Operations LLC. The applicant's responsible official and mailing address is: Mr. Kevin Heisel, Site Director Pensacola Chemicals, Ascend Performance Materials Operations LLC, Ascend Pensacola Plant, Post Office Box 97, Gonzalez, Florida 32560-0097.

Facility Location: Ascend Performance Materials Operations LLC operates the existing Ascend Pensacola Plant, which is located in Escambia County at 3000 Old Chemstrand Road in Cantonment, Florida.

Project: The applicant applied on February 18, 2025, to the Department for an air construction permit to authorize the installation of equipment to produce specialty nylon products known as Nylon 616T, Nylon 612 (PA612), and Nylon 610 (PA610). This project will recommission the existing Caprolactam truck unloading station and storage tank; install six new elutriators with baghouse, dust collectors, and conveyors; and install a pellet recycling system. No increase in overall nylon production capacity of the facility is proposed by this project.

The existing facility manufactures various chemicals and products, including adipic acid, nylon fibers and resins, hexamethylene diamine and maleic anhydride. The site includes several raw materials barge, train and truck offloading and storage operations; chemical process plants which make chemical feedstocks, intermediates and nylon resins; a yarn plant which makes finished yarn products; and boilers and a cogeneration unit which provide process steam and plant electricity. Ascend also operates a maleic anhydride facility, which is owned by Huntsman Petrochemical Corporation.

Permitting Authority: Applications for air construction permits are subject to review in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 403, Florida Statutes (F.S.) and Chapters 62-4, 62-210 and 62-212 of the Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.). The proposed project is not exempt from air permitting requirements and an air permit is required to perform the proposed work. The Permitting Authority responsible for making a permit determination for this project is the Northwest District Office. The Permitting Authority's address is: 160 W. Government Street, Suite 308, Pensacola, Florida 32502-5740. The Permitting Authority's telephone number is 850-595-8300.

Project File: A complete project file is available for public inspection during the normal business hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday (except legal holidays), at the physical address indicated above for the Permitting Authority. The complete project file includes the Draft Permit, the Technical Evaluation and Preliminary Determination, the application and information submitted by the applicant (exclusive of confidential records under Section 403.111, F.S.). Interested persons may contact the Permitting Authority's project engineer for additional information at the address and phone number listed above. In addition, electronic copies of these documents are available on the following web site: https://fldep.dep.state.fl.us/air/emission/apds/default.asp.

Notice of Intent to Issue Air Permit: The Permitting Authority gives notice of its intent to issue an air construction permit to the applicant for the project described above. The applicant has provided reasonable assurance that operation of proposed equipment will not adversely impact air quality and that the project will comply with all appropriate provisions of Chapters 62-4, 62-204, 62-210, 62-212, 62-296 and 62-297, F.A.C. The Permitting Authority will issue a Final Permit in accordance with the conditions of the proposed Draft Permit unless a timely petition for an administrative hearing is filed under Sections 120.569 and 120.57, F.S. or unless public comment received in accordance with this notice results in a different decision or a significant change of terms or conditions.

Comments: The Permitting Authority will accept written comments concerning the proposed Draft Permit for a period of 14 days from the date of publication of the Public Notice. Written comments must be received by the Permitting Authority by close of business (5:00 p.m.) on or before the end of this 14-day period. If written comments received result in a significant change to the Draft Permit, the Permitting Authority shall revise the Draft Permit and require, if applicable, another Public Notice. All comments filed will be made available for public inspection.

Petitions: A person whose substantial interests are affected by the proposed permitting decision may petition for an administrative hearing in accordance with Sections 120.569 and 120.57, F.S. Petitions filed by any persons other than those entitled to written notice under Section 120.60(3), F.S., must be filed within 14 days of publication of the Public Notice or receipt of a written notice, whichever occurs first. Under Section 120.60(3), F.S., however, any person who asked the Permitting Authority for notice of agency action may file a petition within 14 days of receipt of that notice, regardless of the date of publication. A petitioner shall mail a copy of the petition to the applicant at the address indicated above, at the time of filing. A petition for administrative hearing must contain the information set forth below and must be filed (received) with the Agency Clerk in the Office of General Counsel, 3900 Commonwealth Boulevard, MS 35, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-3000, Agency_Clerk@dep.state.fl.us, before the deadline. The failure of any person to file a petition within the appropriate time period shall constitute a waiver of that person's right to request an administrative determination (hearing) under Sections 120.569 and 120.57, F.S., or to intervene in this proceeding and participate as a party to it. Any subsequent intervention (in a proceeding initiated by another party) will be only at the approval of the presiding officer upon the filing of a motion in compliance with Rule 28-106.205, F.A.C.
A petition that disputes the material facts on which the Permitting Authority's action is based must contain the following information: (a) The name and address of each agency affected and each agency's file or identification number, if known; (b) The name, address, any email address, telephone number and any facsimile number of the petitioner; the name, address any email address, telephone number, and any facsimile number of the petitioner's representative, if any, which shall be the address for service purposes during the course of the proceeding; and an explanation of how the petitioner's substantial interests will be affected by the agency determination; (c) A statement of when and how each petitioner received notice of the agency action or proposed decision; (d) A statement of all disputed issues of material fact. If there are none, the petition must so state; (e) A concise statement of the ultimate facts alleged, including the specific facts the petitioner contends warrant reversal or modification of the agency's proposed action; (f) A statement of the specific rules or statutes the petitioner contends require reversal or modification of the agency's proposed action including an explanation of how the alleged facts relate to the specific rules or statutes; and, (g) A statement of the relief sought by the petitioner, stating precisely the action the petitioner wishes the agency to take with respect to the agency's proposed action. A petition that does not dispute the material facts upon which the Permitting Authority's action is based shall state that no such facts are in dispute and otherwise shall contain the same information as set forth above, as required by Rule 28-106.301, F.A.C.

Because the administrative hearing process is designed to formulate final agency action, the filing of a petition means that the Permitting Authority's final action may be different from the position taken by it in this Public Notice of Intent to Issue Air Permit. Persons whose substantial interests will be affected by any such final decision of the Permitting Authority on the application have the right to petition to become a party to the proceeding, in accordance with the requirements set forth above.

Extension of Time: Under Rule 62-110.106(4), F.A.C., a person whose substantial interests are affected by the Department's action may also request an extension of time to file a petition for an administrative hearing. The Department may, for good cause shown, grant the request for an extension of time. Requests for extension of time must be filed with the Office of General Counsel of the Department at 3900 Commonwealth Boulevard, Mail Station 35, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-3000, or via electronic correspondence at Agency_Clerk@dep.state.fl.us, before the deadline for filing a petition for an administrative hearing. A timely request for extension of time shall toll the running of the time period for filing a petition until the request is acted upon.

Mediation: Mediation is not available in this proceeding.
March 6 2025
LSAR0252151

PUBLIC NOTICE OF INTENT TO ISSUE AIR PERMIT
FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION
DRAFT AIR PERMIT NO. 0112799-001-AC
OMEGA FOUNDATION SERVICES, INC
BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

Applicant: Omega Foundation Services, Inc
Facility Location: 19701 S.W. 26th Street, Weston, Florida 33332
Project: Applicant) proposes to construct an Air Burners, LLC self-contained refractory walled air curtain incinerator (ACI) Model No. S330 (or equivalent) rated at 13 tons per hour of wood waste. The ACI blower fan is powered by a 74 horsepower (hp), 4-cylinder Turbo Diesel Engine Model No. HATZ 4H50TIC (or equivalent).
This ACI will be used to incinerate yard waste, tree wood, and vegetation. The proposed work will be conducted at 19701 S.W. 26th Street, Weston, Florida 33332. Standard Industrial Classification No. 0851.

Permitting Authority: Applications for air construction permits are subject to review in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 403, Florida Statutes (F.S.) and Chapters 62-4, 62-210 and 62-212 of the Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.).
The proposed project is not exempt from air permitting requirements and an air permit is required to perform the proposed work. The NRD responsible for making a permit determination for this project is the Natural Resources Division.
The NRD's physical & mailing address is: is 115 S. Andrews Ave, Room 329H, Fort Lauderdale, FL. 33301. The NRD's telephone number is (954) 519-1270.

Project File: A complete project file is available for public inspection during the normal business hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday (except legal holidays), at the physical address indicated above for the Permitting Authority. The complete project file includes the Draft Permit, the Technical Evaluation and Preliminary Determination, the application and information submitted by the applicant (exclusive of confidential records under Section 403.111, F.S.). Interested persons may contact the Permitting Authority's project engineer for additional information at the address and phone number listed above. In addition, electronic copies of these documents are available on the following web site: https://fldep.dep.state.fl.us/air/emission/apds/default.asp.

Notice of Intent to Issue Air Permit: The Permitting Authority gives notice of its intent to issue an air construction permit to the applicant for the project described above. The applicant has provided reasonable assurance that operation of proposed equipment will not adversely impact air quality and that the project will comply with all appropriate provisions of Chapters 62-4, 62-204, 62-210, 62-212, 62-296 and 62-297, F.A.C.
The Permitting Authority will issue a Final Permit in accordance with the conditions of the proposed Draft Permit unless a timely petition for an administrative hearing is filed under Sections 120.569 and 120.57, F.S. or unless public comment received in accordance with this notice results in a different decision or a significant change of terms or conditions.

Comments: The Permitting Authority will accept written comments concerning the proposed Draft Permit for a period of 14 days from the date of publication of the Public Notice. Written comments must be received by the Permitting Authority by close of business (4:00 p.m.) on or before the end of this 14-day period. If written comments received result in a significant change to the Draft Permit, the Permitting Authority shall revise the Draft Permit and require, if applicable, another Public Notice. All comments filed will be made available for public inspection.

Petitions: A person whose substantial interests are affected by the proposed permitting decision may petition for an administrative hearing in accordance with Sections 120.569 and 120.57, F.S. Petitions filed by any persons other than those entitled to written notice under Section 120.60(3), F.S., must be filed within 14 days of publication of the Public Notice or receipt of a written notice, whichever occurs first. Under Section 120.60(3), F.S., however, any person who asked the Permitting Authority for notice of agency action may file a petition within 14 days of receipt of that notice, regardless of the date of publication. A petitioner shall mail a copy of the petition to the applicant at the address indicated above, at the time of filing. A petition for administrative hearing must contain the information set forth below and must be filed (received) with the Broward County Attorney at 115 S. Andrews Avenue, Room: 423, Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33301-1872 (Telephone: 954/357-7600, Fax: 954/357-7641) before the deadline. The failure of any person to file a petition within the appropriate time period shall constitute a waiver of that person's right to request an administrative determination (hearing) under Sections 120.569 and 120.57, F.S., or to intervene in this proceeding and participate as a party to it. Any subsequent intervention (in a proceeding initiated by another party) will be only at the approval of the presiding officer upon the filing of a motion in compliance with Rule 28-106.205, F.A.C.

A petition that disputes the material facts on which the Permitting Authority's action is based must contain the following information: (a) The name and address of each agency affected and each agency's file or identification number, if known; (b) The name, address, any email address, telephone number and any facsimile number of the petitioner; the name, address any email address, telephone number, and any facsimile number of the petitioner's representative, if any, which shall be the address for service purposes during the course of the proceeding; and an explanation of how the petitioner's substantial interests will be affected by the agency determination; (c) A statement of when and how each petitioner received notice of the agency action or proposed decision; (d) A statement of all disputed issues of material fact. If there are none, the petition must so state; (e) A concise statement of the ultimate facts alleged, including the specific facts the petitioner contends warrant reversal or modification of the agency's proposed action; (f) A statement of the specific rules or statutes the petitioner contends require reversal or modification of the agency's proposed action including an explanation of how the alleged facts relate to the specific rules or statutes; and, (g) A statement of the relief sought by the petitioner, stating precisely the action the petitioner wishes the agency to take with respect to the agency's proposed action.
A petition that does not dispute the material facts upon which the Permitting Authority's action is based shall state that no such facts are in dispute and otherwise shall contain the same information as set forth above, as required by Rule 28-106.301, F.A.C.

Because the administrative hearing process is designed to formulate final agency action, the filing of a petition means that the Permitting Authority's final action may be different from the position taken by it in this Public Notice of Intent to Issue Air Permit. Persons whose substantial interests will be affected by any such final decision of the Permitting Authority on the application have the right to petition to become a party to the proceeding, in accordance with the requirements set forth above.

Extension of Time: Under Rule 62-110.106(4), F.A.C., a person whose substantial interests are affected by the Department's action may also request an extension of time to file a petition for an administrative hearing. The Department may, for good cause shown, grant the request for an extension of time. Requests for extension of time must be filed with the Office of the Broward County Attorney at 115 S. Andrews Avenue, Room: 423, Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33301-1872 (Telephone: 954/357-7600, Fax: 954/357-7641) before the deadline for filing a petition for an administrative hearing. A timely request for extension of time shall toll the running of the time period for filing a petition until the request is acted upon.

Mediation: Mediation is not available in this proceeding.
3/8/2025 7780461

Notice of Action - Miscellaneous
STATE OF FLORIDA
DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION
NOTICE OF AGENCY ACTION
The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) gives notice that it has approved a No Further Action Proposal with Engineering and Institutional Controls and issued a Site Rehabilitation Completion Order with Conditions for a contaminated site. Ryan Jacksonville, LLC obtained this order in reference to DEP Site ID # ERIC_14791, Block 48, Jacksonville Harts Area, 337 West Adams Street, Jacksonville, Florida 32202 (aka JEA Headquarters) which restricts exposure to contamination in the following manner: caps over contaminated soil and prohibition of groundwater use. Complete copies of the No Further Action Proposal, the Institutional Control and the Site Rehabilitation Order with Conditions are available for public inspection online at Oculus, the online document management system. Please use the DEP Site, Facility or Project number listed on the DEPs preliminary evaluation to communicate with DEP or Oculus. Local governments with jurisdiction over the property subject to the Institutional Control, real property owner(s) of any property subject to the Institutional or Engineering Control, residents of any property subject to the Institutional Control and any party holding a materially affected encumbrance in the area subject to the control have 21 days from publication of this notice to file a petition with the DEP. The petition must be filed (received by the Clerk) in the Office of General Counsel of the DEP at 3900 Commonwealth Boulevard, Mail Station 35, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-3000, or via electronic correspondence at Agency_Clerk@FloridaDEP.gov.
Mar. 6 (24-01262D)

Hospital demolition within budget

Jim Little
Pensacola News Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK – FLORIDA

Since talks began about demolishing the old Baptist Hospital, one major question over the future redevelopment has been whether the $16 million estimate to tear down the major buildings is an accurate number. That question was finally answered last week with a yes, according to Pensacola Mayor D.C. Reeves.

Reeves told the News Journal he was confident after the bids came in last week, that a firm will be selected that falls within the $16 million budget.

"We're excited and certainly encouraged to feel confident that one of the biggest hurdles we had was ensuring for the funding (of the demolition) of the property, and at this moment, we feel very confident that that hurdle has been mitigated," Reeves said.

Reeves couldn't discuss the details of the bids because of city procurement rules, but the bids are being envaulted by city staff to ensure they include the full scope of work to demolish the property. A selection committee is expected to meet in April to decide on a winning bid.

Pensacola has been working for the last two years on negotiating taking over the old property to redevelop it into a mixed-income development similar to transformational projects like ones done in New Orleans and Atlanta.

An engineering report last year found it was not "commercially viable" to save the property, and the city moved forward with seeking bids from a firm that

See HOSPITAL DEMO, Page 2A

Hospital demo

Continued from Page 1A

could safely demolish the entire property.

Reeves said that with the continued support of the state and county governments, the project would move forward.

The city and Baptist Hospital are still working toward completing a donation agreement that would allow the city to take possession of most of the old hospital property.

Some of the property has already been sold to Paces Presevation Partners who are building two affordable housing develeopments on the property. Those projects are expected to begin this year.

Baptist Hospital sold the property for those projects for $2.9 million. Reeves has request that those funds go to pay for the demolition of the property.

With those funds, plus $7 million from the state, $1 million from city itself, there are approximately $10.9 million in funding secured for the demolition project. The city is seeking another $3 million from Baptist Hospital as part of the donation agreement.

The city is also requesting $2 million from Escambia County. The County Commission voted last year to support the idea, but those funds have not been secured. Commission Chairman Mike Kohler has since questioned whether the county should pay to fund the demolition.

Reeves expects to go before the County Commission later this month to make the case for the county to support the project.

"I feel like we're all in this together," Reeves said. "Our citizens of our city and our county don't care where the city limit line is. What they want is somewhere to sleep; they want a job, and they want to be able to provide for their family. We know that the consequential impact of this Baptist project will be a positive, generationally, for city residents, county residents, and our region."

The old Baptist Hospital campus along E Street as it appears on Nov. 7, 2024. Pensacola Mayor D.C. Reeves said it appears work to demolish the campus will fall within the allotted $16 million budget.
TONY GIBERSON/ TGIBERSON@ PNJ.COM