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OTA News Summer 2021

Greetings!

This issue includes information about OTA services, important regulatory updates, and more.

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In-Person OTA Site Visits Available This Fall

In order to continue providing Massachusetts businesses with the services they needed during the COVID-19 pandemic, OTA developed protocols in 2020 for remote technical assistance site visits. While we will continue to make these remote assistance options available to companies that require them, we are delighted to announce that **this fall, we will again be offering in-person site visits.**

Our technical assistance providers are eager to assist your facility with toxics use reduction, resource conservation, regulatory compliance, and other environmental health and safety concerns. Reach out to the OTA technical assistance provider who focuses on your industry today.

[Find an OTA Industry Specialist](#)

Toxics Use Reduction Act Shortlisted for International Policy Award

The Massachusetts Toxics Use Reduction Act (TURA) was among 12 policies from five continents shortlisted for the Future Policy Award 2021.

Awarded by the German-based World Future Council, the prize celebrates [the most effective policy solutions](#) that minimize the adverse health effects of exposure to chemicals on human health and the environment. In total, 55 policies from 36 countries were nominated in November 2020. TURA is the only policy from the United States that made it to the finalist stage.

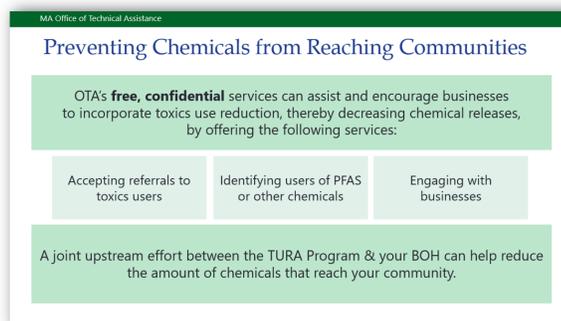
[Read more about the award and TURA's recognition in the Toxics Use Reduction Institute press release.](#)

Tackling PFAS Contamination Upstream

OTA is working on several projects to help protect drinking water from contamination from per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS).

Collaborations with wastewater treatment facilities: Under new regulations, upon renewal of their National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits, wastewater treatment facilities (WWTFs) will be required to test for certain PFAS compounds discharged by upstream facilities. OTA has already begun reaching out to companies upstream from WWTFs whose discharges may be tested. We can assist your company in identifying PFAS-containing products and communicating with your supplier to reduce the risk of inadvertent discharge. OTA has also prepared a [supplier notification letter template](#) to help you reach out to your suppliers so you can identify which products contain reportable PFAS chemicals.

Webinar with Massachusetts Environmental Health Association: OTA Director Tiffany Skogstrom recently presented at a [Massachusetts Environmental Health Association \(MEHA\)](#) webinar alongside Liz Harriman and Rachel Massey from the [Toxics Use Reduction Institute \(TURI\)](#).



Excerpt from Tiffany Skogstrom's MEHA presentation on PFAS source reduction. You can click on the image to download a copy of the presentation.

Her presentation covered the critical importance of source reduction for reducing PFAS contamination and exposure, and how OTA is working to help companies eliminate OFAS from their operations. A recording of the webinar is available [here](#) (passcode: **P46Acw7!**), and the slides are available for download [here](#).

Identifying PFAS at manufacturing facilities: OTA is also developing questionnaires to help companies identify potential sources of PFAS in their facilities based on common uses of PFAS-containing products. To date, we have begun creating questionnaires for the paper

and metal finishing industries, and plan to develop questionnaires for other industries as well. Any company interested in learning more about possible sources of PFAS at its facilities can reach out to [a member of our team](#) to walk through one of these questionnaires or have a conversation with an OTA staff member.

List of PFAS-containing products: Many companies unwittingly use products that contain PFAS. We are working with the [Toxics Use Reduction Institute \(TURI\)](#) to develop a list of products known to contain PFAS so that companies can determine whether they may be inadvertently using PFAS. Once this list is developed, we plan to make it available to companies who wish to make sure the products they use are PFAS-free. If you are aware of any products that belong on this list, please contact [Tiffany Skogstrom](#).

Be on the lookout for future communication from [your OTA specialist](#), or feel free to reach out to us. **As always, OTA services are no-cost & absolutely confidential.**

Toxics Use Reduction Planner Certification Course Begins August 13

There are still seats available for the [Toxics Use Reduction Planner certification course](#) that begins August 13.

The course includes a six-week period to complete the asynchronous online training modules that cover all the fundamental elements of TUR planning. This is followed by a five-week practicum that features best practices presented by veteran planners and group project work using a real-world industry case example.

If you are interested in joining this year's class, please [fill out this brief application](#). If you have any questions, [contact Pam Eliason](#) at the Toxics Use Reduction Institute.

[Read more details and register](#)

Welcome, Kari!

OTA and the entire TURA program extend a warm welcome to Kari Sasportas, OTA's new Outreach and Chemical Policy Analyst. In this role, Kari is responsible for raising the agency's visibility as a free and confidential resource for Massachusetts toxics users and for coordinating OTA's chemical policy development and research. Kari is a Registered Environmental Health Specialist (REHS) and has over 13 years of experience in

state and local government and municipal and regional emergency preparedness. Kari previously served as the Public Health Director for the Town of Lexington, Manager of Community Resilience and Preparedness at the Cambridge Public Health Department, Health Officer at the Watertown Health Department, and Environmental Analyst at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. In Cambridge, she participated in developing citywide and neighborhood-specific Climate Change Preparedness and Resilience plans, and led an effort engaging local youth in documenting climate change preparedness and outreach with vulnerable and at-risk populations. Kari is currently serving professional appointments as a Technical Advisor to Board of the [National Environmental Health Association](#) (NEHA) and as a member of the [National Association of County and City Health Officials \(NACCHO\) Global Climate Change Workgroup](#). Previously, she served on the [Advisory Committee to the Administrative Council on Toxics Use Reduction](#). Kari earned a Master of Public Health (MPH) in Environmental Health and a Master of Social Work (MSW) from Boston University.



Congratulations, Caredwen!

We would like to congratulate OTA Communications Analyst Caredwen Foley on her graduation from Boston University School of Public Health. In May 2021, Caredwen received a Master of Public Health in Environmental Health, and was inducted into the Delta Omega Honorary Society in Public Health. Caredwen was also awarded BUSPH's 2021 William B. Patterson Memorial Award for Excellence in Environmental and Occupational Health.

Caredwen is continuing her academic research in her spare time, including projects on per-and polyfluoroalkyl substance (PFAS) contamination in Massachusetts drinking water, exposure assessment for toxic elements in ceramic drinkware, and a project on mercury and persistent organic pollutant co-contamination in freshwater fish in the United States, on which she recently presented at an [NIEHS Superfund Research Program webinar](#).



TURA Compliance Tip

Because only some members of the TURA chemical categories appear in the [Complete List of TURA Chemicals document](#), it is important to be extra vigilant about whether TURA thresholds for chemical categories are being met. Did you know there are hundreds of chemicals in the [“Certain Glycol Ethers” category](#) alone?

Although relatively few of these chemicals tend to be used in large quantities by manufacturers, it is good practice to give some extra consideration to chemical categories each year before your Butyl Cellosolve™ or lead chromate use unexpectedly exceeds TURA thresholds.

Reach out to an **OTA staff member** if you have questions!

About Us

The **Massachusetts Office of Technical Assistance & Technology (OTA)** is a non-regulatory agency within the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs.

OTA is driven by the premise that preventing pollution makes good business sense. We provide **free, confidential** onsite technical assistance to Massachusetts manufacturers, businesses, and institutions.

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