

**A Summary of EPN's All-Hands Meeting:
Future of EPN and Forever Chemicals—PFAS
Friday, February 19, 2021**

Rob Wolcott, EPN Board Chair, began the meeting with a discussion of the [results of the member survey and calls with partners](#) on the Future of EPN and the Board's decision to continue. Please read [this letter](#) from Rob about our future directions.

EPN members **Betsy Southerland** and **Bob Sussmann** then described an EPN effort underway to develop an alternative PFAS action plan. Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a widely-used chemical class that is persistent, highly accumulative, and toxic. PFAS presents a complex issue that impacts every part of EPA and is national and international in scope. Betsy, Bob, and other EPN members looked at and were disappointed with the existing PFAS action plan developed under the Trump administration. The Trump plan does little to actually protect human health and reduce risk and doesn't have an adequate framework to address the entire PFAS class. In addition, it places the burden of developing analytical methods and toxicity assessments and associated costs on the Department of Defense (DOD) and EPA; industry is not being required under TSCA test orders to provide this data. Some of these concerns were presented in an [EPN letter to former EPA Administrator Wheeler](#) in support of a petition requiring testing of 54 PFAS.

EPN's proposed PFAS action plan would have four main goals: 1) Develop a systematic approach to obtain data on PFAS. This includes looking at PFAS as a group, not one by one, and finding surrogate measures for the presence of PFAS where applicable. The burden of gathering data would be placed on industry. 2) Look at how TSCA authorities could prohibit or severely limit the introduction of new PFAS and new uses of existing PFAS. 3) Eliminate all non-essential uses of existing PFAS. 4) For every EPA program, develop specific recommendations on how to reduce environmental releases to the extent feasible and to evaluate the impacts on communities of historical and current PFAS exposure.

EPN is getting input from numerous stakeholders and expects to release this proposed plan in April.

Betsy Southerland earned a PhD in environmental science and engineering from Virginia Tech. She worked as an environmental scientist for local and state government before joining EPA in 1984. At EPA, she served as a manager in the Water and Superfund programs, retiring in 2017 as the Director of the Office of Science and Technology for the Office of Water. She was inducted into the Academy of Distinguished Alumni at Virginia Tech in 2013 and received a Distinguished Presidential Rank Award in 2015 in recognition of her career accomplishments.

Bob Sussman served in the Obama administration from 2009-2013 as co-chair of the Transition Team for EPA and then as senior policy counsel to the EPA Administrator. He was a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress in 2008, writing and speaking about climate change and energy. He previously served in the Clinton administration as the EPA Deputy Administrator. He is now a consultant on energy and environmental policy.