



A Summary of EPN's All-Hands Meeting: Overview of Recent Accomplishments and Community Assistance Technical work Friday, June 25, 2021

Michelle Roos provided an update on EPN's current activities

With a new administration in place, the [Environmental Protection Network](#) (EPN) is focused on building the capacity of environmental agencies and the communities they serve to truly address the most urgent health and environmental crises.

- EPN will ensure that EPA not only addresses the damage done during the Trump administration, but also advances policies, budgets, and institutional changes to [Reset the Course of EPA](#).
- EPN will provide capacity-building technical assistance and training to environmental justice communities; NGOs; and under-resourced state, local, and tribal government agencies.
- EPN will provide training and mentoring for EPA staff and managers, look for opportunities to recruit and retain underrepresented populations to work at EPA, and inform people about EPA's impacts.
- EPN will educate [Congress](#) and serve as a critical resource for facts, objective analysis, and scientific rigor for [reporters](#) and [NGOs](#).

Update on Budget/Appropriations work (Dave Coursen, former attorney, EPA Office of General Counsel)

EPN has been very vocal about supporting a robust budget for EPA. On June 9, EPN sent a [letter](#) to appropriators supporting EPA's budget request. Dave Coursen has also authored numerous op-eds, including:

- "[Rebuilding EPA through its climate programs](#)," The Hill
- "[A bold budget vision for climate](#)," The Hill
- "[The terrible environmental costs of stagnant EPA funding](#)," The Hill
- "[Targeting federal spending to help EPA promote environmental justice](#)," The Hill

Update on PFAS work (Betsy Southerland, former Director, Office of Science and Technology, EPA Office of Water)

On June 8th, EPN sent a [letter](#) to Chairman Carper and Ranking Member Capito of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works related to its June 9th hearing on "[PFAS: the View from Affected Citizens and States](#)." EPN referenced [its earlier PFAS recommendations to the administration](#) and urged EPA to move away from a chemical-by-chemical approach reliant on federal government research and limited regulation, and embrace a comprehensive class-based approach. At the end of the hearing, Senator Carper specifically mentioned submitting EPN's comments to the record and EPN met with staff from the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee the following week.

Capacity-Building Technical Assistance

We have been piloting this work for the last few years, and have ramped up our activities over the last few months.

Goals:

- Communities and NGOs have access to greater resources, thus leveling the playing field and addressing health and environmental issues in a more equitable manner.

- Communities gain a greater ability to meaningfully participate in environmental decision-making processes that impact their health and quality of life through, among other things, integrated community science and research.
- Communities are better prepared to define, analyze, and prescribe solutions to systemic and disproportionate impacts in their neighborhoods, thereby bringing about transformative, long-overdue change.

Recently, EPN volunteers have engaged in a number of projects. The following volunteers provided an update on a few of those projects:

- Jim Woolford, former Director, EPA Office of Superfund Remediation and Technology Innovation - technical support to assist a community in Alaska where local drinking water supplies have been heavily contaminated by PFAS from the use of firefighting foam.
- Barnes Johnson, former Director, EPA Office of Resource Conservation and Recovery - technical advice on proposed Illinois state regulations that address fugitive dust at coal ash sites.
- John Bachmann, former Associate Director for Science Policy and New Programs, EPA Office of Air Quality Standards and Planning - technical advice on the use of low-cost air monitors when a community group in Texas realized that neither the state nor EPA would accept the data they had been collecting.