

Now What? Prioritizing your Emerging Contaminants Portfolio

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Emerging Contaminants, such as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances or PFAS, have become a challenging class of compounds globally due to their ubiquitous nature and inability to break down in the environment. They have been detected in many groundwater sources globally and proactive groundwater surveillance programs are now a requirement under many regulatory jurisdictions. Although surprising to many, when surveillance programs are employed, detectable levels of PFAS have become common place. No matter what industry, whether it be industrial/manufacturing, transportation, oil and gas, or otherwise, dealing with the news of detectable levels of PFAS can be technically challenging and financially straining for any organization from an environmental, human health, financial, and social perspective. Often begging the question “Now what?”

Strategic management planning is a necessity to ensure that potential emerging contaminants are identified early, their procurement, use, storage, waste, and disposal quantified, alternatives are considered, and their risk and potential liabilities associated with the business or organization are evaluated systematically and communicated regularly. Strategic planning ensures that when the “Now what?” question comes up, you are prepared.

This presentation provides a summary of how to determine use and presence of PFAS across various industries, where and how to look using a desktop evaluation, and then how to develop a risk-ranking strategy to prioritize when, where, and how to spend resources and budget to avoid, mitigate, or manage overall liability. Using PFAS as an example, Wood will illustrate some of the methodology and processes we have developed to help clients, from State and Federal entities to industrial and oil and gas clients. Lessons learned and future-casting based on current trends will be shared.

Shalene Thomas

Shalene Thomas, is Vice President and Global Emerging Contaminant Program Manager for Wood. A leading advisor on strategically managing emerging contaminant challenges, she has more than 20 years of experience as an environmental consultant including 13 years supporting clients in the US, Canada, Europe, Australia, and South America to address per- and polyfluoroalkyl substance (PFAS) risks in groundwater. Shalene is a passionate advocate for advancing innovative solutions to address PFAS contamination and manage and mitigate risk. Shalene co-leads the Interstate Technology Regulatory Council PFAS Aqueous Film Forming Foam sub-team to advance the state of PFAS science and practice.

Julius Kreissig

Julius Kreissig is an economist and environmental policy specialist based in Calgary, Alberta. He has seven years of experience supporting government and industry in Europe, Canada and beyond with assessing the design and potential impacts of environmental regulation, cost-benefit analysis and socio-economic analysis. Julius has led work to help shape PFAS policy for the European Commission, the European Chemicals Agency and the Danish Environmental Protection Agency, covering PFAS in fire fighting foams, textiles and construction products.