

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROJECT

DEFENDING PUBLIC HEALTH SINCE 2012

environmentalhealthproject.org

MEDIA ADVISORY

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Expert Panel Discussion: “PFAS: Breaking Down the Future of Forever Chemicals in Our Water”

The [Environmental Health Project](#) (EHP) will host an expert panel discussion on the topic:

PFAS: Breaking Down the Future of Forever Chemicals in Our Water

PFAS, or per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, are designed to last. They are the substances that earn the labels fire-retardant, stain-resistant, non-stick, and water-resistant. These are often desired qualities in products that we use, however widespread use has led to PFAS contamination of the environment in which we live. Research has shown that these substances may cause serious health problems even at low levels of exposure as they affect how hormones operate in the body.

This one-hour panel discussion will delve into:

- How PFAS get into our water, including risks from shale gas development
- Testing for PFAS
- Remediating contamination on a community wide scale
- Exploring policy options specifically in terms of state level responses to reduce exposure to PFAS
- How best to protect public health and our most vulnerable communities.

The discussion will be moderated by EHP’s public health manager, Makenzie White, MPH, LMSW. A Q&A will be included in the discussion. A recording of the event will be available afterward.

Date & Time: Tuesday, March 21, 7 p.m.

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Presenters

JOSE AGUAYO, MPH

Jose Aguayo is the Built Environment Senior Manager at the Center for Environmental Health (CEH) where he engages large institutions in purchasing healthier products for use in the built environment through research, advocacy, and education. He holds a bachelor's degree in Biology and a master's degree in Global Health, both from George Mason University. Jose has previously worked at the Center for Health, Environment and Justice (CHEJ), where he provided technical assistance to environmental justice grassroots groups; as a contractor for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, providing research and data analysis work to the Safety and Sustainability Division; and as a research analyst at the Environmental Working Group, researching toxic ingredients in food and personal care products.

DUSTY HORWITT, JD

Dusty Horwitt has spent nearly 20 years researching and working to protect communities from the health and environmental impacts of oil and gas drilling and fracking as well as other environmental risks. An attorney and former reporter, he has written a chapter on fracking chemical disclosure for a textbook published by Elsevier. He has also been quoted in, and had his work featured in, media outlets, including the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, and Marketplace on NPR. He has played significant roles in efforts to protect New York State, the George Washington National Forest, and the Delaware River Basin from unsafe shale gas drilling and fracking. He is the author of Physicians for Social Responsibility's report [Fracking with Forever Chemicals](#) about the use of PFAS in fracking and lead author of PSR's reports [Fracking with Forever Chemicals in Colorado](#) and [Fracking with Forever Chemicals in Ohio](#) about the use of PFAS in oil and gas extraction in those states. He is continuing to work with PSR on issues related to oil and gas chemical exposure. In 2022, he was invited to testify before the Colorado House of Representatives and State Senate regarding legislation, later signed into law, that banned the use of PFAS in oil and gas wells in Colorado and improved oil and gas chemical disclosure in the state. Previously, he worked as a deputy press secretary on Capitol Hill and as a reporter at the City News Bureau of Chicago. He is a member of the Virginia State Bar.

DETLEF KNAPPE, PHD

Dr. Detlef Knappe is the S. James Ellen Distinguished Professor of Civil, Construction, and Environmental Engineering at NC State University. He joined the NCSU faculty in 1996 after receiving a PhD degree in Environmental Engineering from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Detlef's research interest broadly encompasses drinking water quality and treatment, and he has conducted research on per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) since 2010. Detlef is a member of the NC Secretaries' Science Advisory Board, and he is Deputy Director of NCSU's Superfund Center for Environmental and Health Effects of PFAS. He serves as Associate Editor of the journal AWWA Water Science.

CARLA NG, PHD

Dr. Carla Ng is an Associate Professor in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at the University of Pittsburgh, with secondary appointments in Environmental and Occupational Health and in Chemical and Petroleum Engineering. She received her PhD in Chemical & Biological Engineering from Northwestern University in 2008. Her research focuses on the development of models and tools to evaluate the fate and effects of legacy and emerging chemicals in organisms and ecosystems, with a particular focus on PFAS.

JASON C. WHITE, PHD

Dr. Jason C. White is the Director of the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES), the oldest Agricultural Experiment Station in the United States and has a research program on food safety and security, with a focus on sustainable nano-enabled agriculture. Dr. White is involved with research looking to develop sustainable nano materials to bind to PFAS and increase plant uptake. Dr. White was elected to the Connecticut Academy of Science and Engineering in 2021 and is a member of the European Science Foundation College of Experts. He is a Commissioned Official of the U.S. FDA and a Clarivate Web of Science Highly Cited Researcher from 2020-2022. He received his PhD in Environmental Toxicology from Cornell University in 1997 and has secondary appointments in the Yale University School of Public Health and the University of Massachusetts Stockbridge School of Agriculture.

Moderator Bio:**MAKENZIE WHITE, MPH, LMSW**

Makenzie White is the Public Health Manager at the Environmental Health Project. Makenzie received a bachelor's degree in Social Work from Franciscan University of Steubenville and a Master of Public Health and a Master of Social Work from the University of Pittsburgh. Previously, she worked in nonprofit management, providing services to adults and children with intellectual disabilities, developmental disabilities, and mental health disorders. She is currently a licensed and practicing social worker in Pittsburgh and serves as the strategic projects manager for Cancer Free Economy. Outside of work, Makenzie serves as president of Engineers Without Borders Pittsburgh Professional Chapter (EWB-PPC), a member of Brentwood Borough's planning commission, and a member on the Brentwood Democratic Committee. She is a co-author on EHP's white paper, *Pennsylvania's Shale Gas Boom: How Policy Decisions Failed to Protect Public Health and What We Can Do to Correct It*, and provides regular expert testimony on the public health impacts of shale gas development.

Contact Scott Smith with questions: ssmith@environmentalhealthproject.org, 412-600-0738

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About the Environmental Health Project

The [Environmental Health Project](#) (EHP) is a nonprofit public health organization that defends public health in the face of oil and gas development. We provide frontline communities with timely monitoring, interpretation, and guidance. We engage diverse stakeholders: health professionals, researchers, community organizers, public servants, and others. We do so because knowledge protects health.

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