

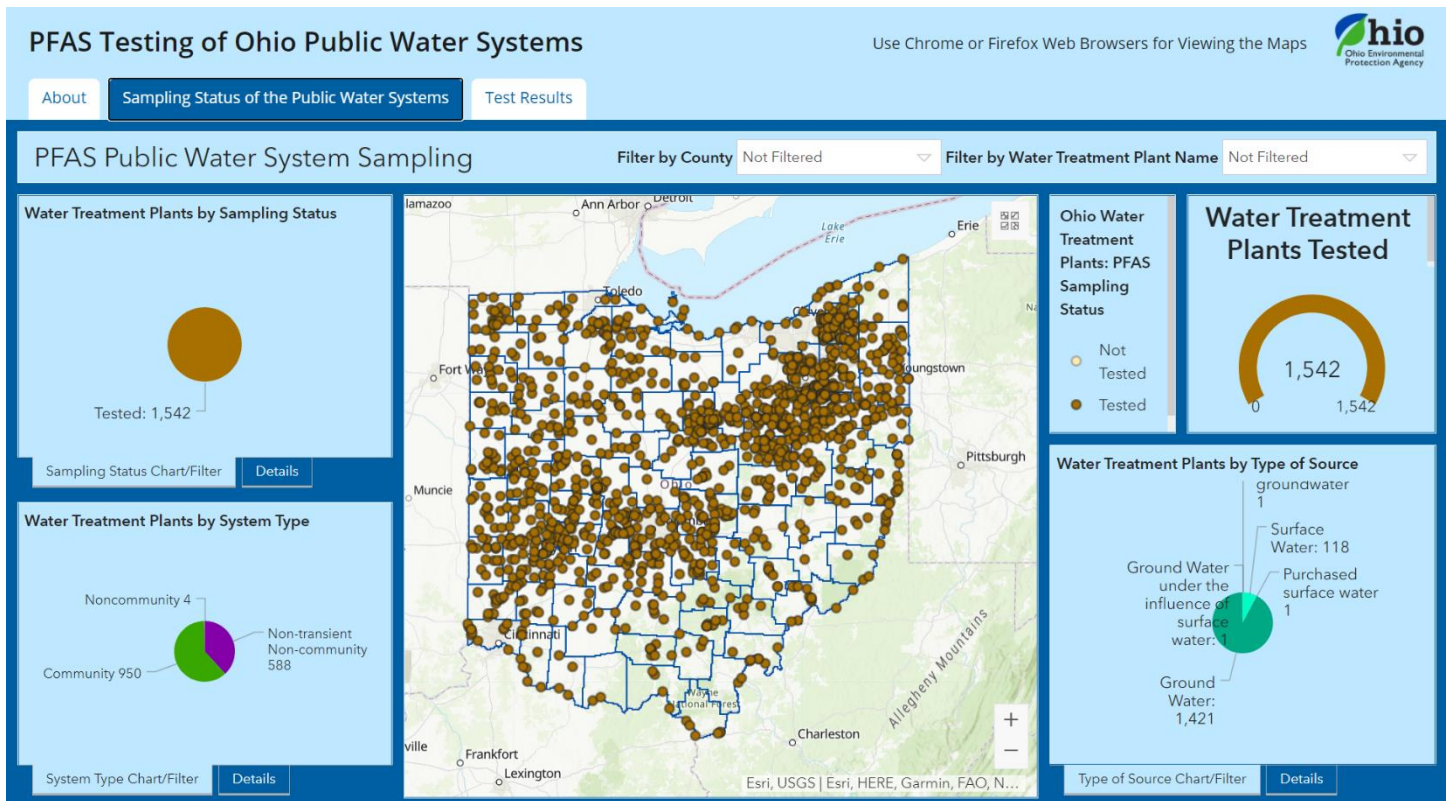
Drinking Water Testing Completed Under Ohio PFAS Action Plan

Ohio EPA received the final testing results for the presence of certain per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in drinking water from Ohio’s public water systems in December, bringing to a close the Agency’s statewide sampling initiative of almost 1,550 public water systems under Ohio’s PFAS Action Plan.

Although there are currently no national drinking water standards for PFAS nor mandates for its testing, Governor Mike DeWine *called for the development of the PFAS Action Plan* last year to identify the extent of PFAS chemicals in Ohio’s public drinking water systems. The testing found only two public water systems in the state with PFAS levels above the state’s action level.

“There is still a lot that experts don’t yet know about the dangers of PFAS compounds in drinking water, but as a result of this work, we can say with certainty that these chemicals are not widely contaminating Ohio’s public water systems,” said Governor DeWine. “We want Ohioans to feel confident that their water is safe, and I’m pleased that these testing results can provide some peace of mind.”

“We greatly appreciate Governor DeWine’s leadership in this area,” said Ohio EPA Director Laurie Stevenson. “Ohio now joins the ranks of only a handful of other states that have taken on such a comprehensive sampling initiative. We now have very important data that can help us as we work with our public water systems to ensure they can continue to provide safe drinking water to their customers.”



The water sampling began in February 2020 with the goal to test Ohio’s public water systems serving communities, schools, childcare facilities, and mobile home parks by the end of the year. Through this initiative, nearly 94 percent of the nearly 1,550 public drinking water systems tested revealed no detection of PFAS compounds. Low levels of PFAS compounds, well below the health advisory level, were detected in six percent of systems.

In the two water systems found with elevated PFAS levels, immediate steps were taken to identify alternatives to ensure safe drinking water. Ohio EPA will continue to work with these systems on regular testing to monitor PFAS levels and to identify options to address any potential public health risks. Ohio EPA is also continuing to monitor the water systems with low PFAS levels to ensure levels don’t begin to rise.

PFAS are manmade chemicals used in products such as carpeting, upholstery, cookware, food packaging, and firefighting foam. PFAS can be transported through rainwater run-off or migrate through soil, posing potential contamination threats to surface and ground waters. Ohio EPA provided the test results to each public water system and published the data publicly on Ohio’s interactive PFAS website, pfas.ohio.gov. For more information on PFAS and Ohio’s PFAS Action Plan, visit pfas.ohio.gov.

Ohio’s Coronavirus Wastewater Monitoring Network

In an effort to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19, a network across Ohio is studying samples of wastewater to look for the presence of gene copies/fragments of the virus that causes the disease.

The initiative is a collaboration between the Ohio Department of Health (ODH), the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA), the Ohio Water Resources Center (Ohio WRC) at The Ohio State University, and other participating universities, including The University of Toledo, Kent State University, and The University of Akron.

Prior to the wastewater monitoring network being established, increases of COVID-19 cases in communities had been tracked by testing people with symptoms, an indicator that lags behind the actual spread of the disease. Because of this, there is a need to use early monitoring methods that estimate the disease’s impact on the broader community.

Research in the U.S. and elsewhere has shown that non-infectious RNA (ribonucleic acid) from the virus that causes COVID-19 (called SARS-CoV-2) can be excreted in the feces of both symptomatic and asymptomatic infected people and can be detected in wastewater as many as three to seven days before those infections lead to increases in case counts or hospitalizations. As such, monitoring raw wastewater in sewage collection systems can provide an early warning of disease increase in a community. Community and public health leaders can use this early warning information to make decisions about protective actions to help limit further spread of the disease before cases begin to occur.

For details about this effort, including interactive maps and results, please visit the [coronavirus.ohio.gov website](https://coronavirus.ohio.gov).



Virtual Compliance Assistance Conference a Success

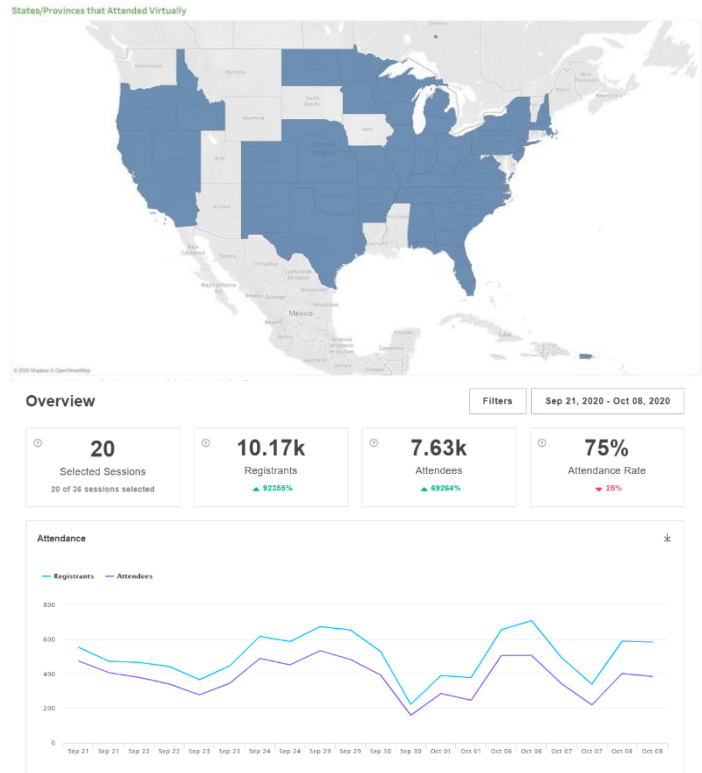
Despite challenging and uncertain times, Ohio EPA is clearly demonstrating the ability to find innovative, interactive, and engaging solutions to best convey our message, explain our regulations, and further collaborate with the regulated community.



Ohio EPA's first ever three-week-long Virtual Compliance Assistance Conference kicked off Sept. 21 and ended on Oct. 8. The conference involved 28 presenters, five moderators, 18 subject matter experts, offered two keynotes, an Encouraging Environmental Excellence awards ceremony, two panel discussions, and 15 technical sessions.

Attendees were not just from Ohio. As shown here, attendees joined virtually from 37 states and provinces. The chart below the map shows registration and attendance trends throughout the conference. As shown on the table, 10 sessions had more than 500 registrants.

Due to clever marketing efforts, offering of a variety of continuing education units for nearly every session, and innovative interactive attendee engagement opportunities, the conference had more than 10,000 registrations and nearly 8,000 attendees with individual sessions averaging 500 or more attendees. In addition, each session was recorded and made **available online through the Agency's YouTube Channel**.



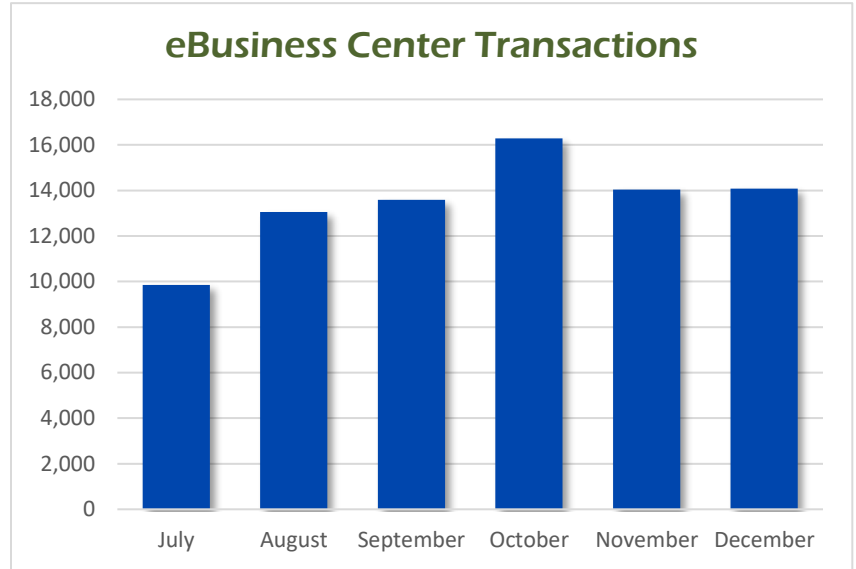
Session Title	Registrants
National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit - New and Proposed Rules and Policies	708
Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure Plans for Oil and Oil Products	581
Preparing a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan	589
Storm Water Permitting Requirements for Industrial Activity	656
Keynote with Director Harris	529
A Deeper Dive into Universal Waste and Used Oil Rules	654
Hazardous Waste Rules - What's coming down the line	674
Hazardous Waste the Basics Part 1	617
Hazardous Waste the Basics Part 2	587
Keynote with Director Stevenson	553

Customer Interactions

Ohio EPA's eBusiness Center is a secure portal for regulated entities to electronically complete and file Ohio EPA-related reports and permit applications.

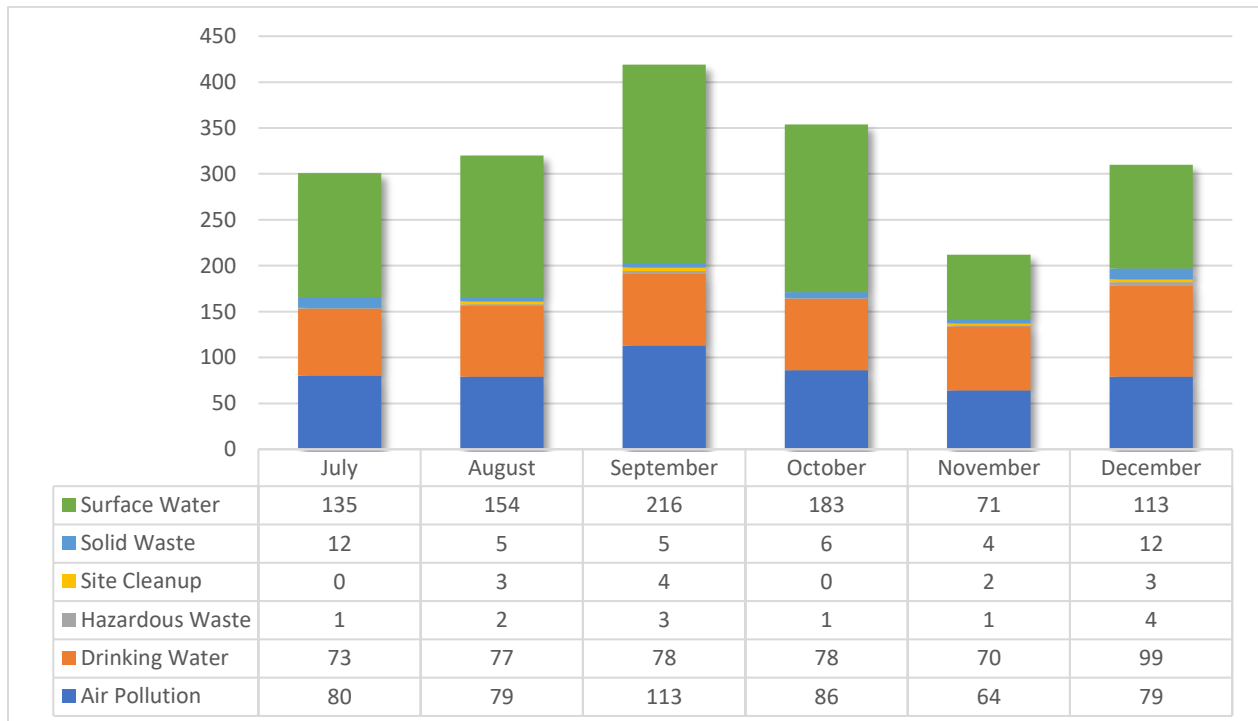
In addition to these business transactions, Ohio EPA also interacts with the regulated community, public and other stakeholders daily through phone calls, online meetings and site visits, email, newsletters, listserv announcements, and webinars.

As the Agency continues to work remotely in response to the pandemic, we are finding new ways to reach out to our customers and refining methods to ensure that we provide timely information and responses.



Agency Permits and Authorizing Actions

This dashboard displays permits and other authorizing actions, which include plan approvals and permits-to-install, issued from July 1 – Dec. 31, 2020 for key program areas, including surface water, air pollution, and drinking water.

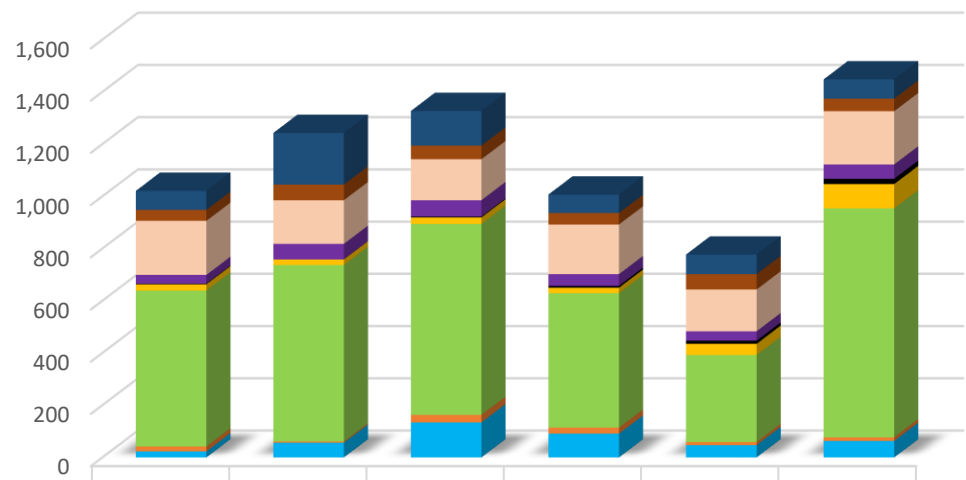


Compliance Inspections and Verification Reviews

This dashboard reflects the Agency's efforts to verify or inspect for compliance with permits, environmental rules and other requirements. These are broken down by quarter and Agency program. An inspection is defined as Agency personnel conducting a field visit to a site or facility. Verification review includes review of submittals that are required by the regulations, such as compliance reports, monitoring data, etc. The large numbers in the drinking water program reflect the Agency's work in reviewing monitoring and analytical reports that are submitted by thousands of public water systems each month.

Due to a change in process, the actual number of drinking water compliance inspections and verification reviews for December was 3,227. To ensure reporting consistency, these additional totals (650 notice of deficiency letters to public water systems that did not submit required metric data and 1,700 license to operate notifications which, prior to December, were sent in hard copy rather than electronically) were not included in the chart.

Compliance Inspections and Verification Reviews



	July	August	September	October	November	December
■ Voluntary Action Program (VAP)	73	198	133	71	75	74
■ Underground Injection Control (UIC)	42	60	52	44	59	48
■ Solid Waste Facilities	207	167	157	190	160	204
■ Resource Conservation and Recovery Act - Hazardous Waste	34	60	63	45	36	55
■ Other	2	0	3	7	12	20
■ National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)	24	21	25	21	43	93
■ Drinking Water	597	676	731	515	333	877
■ Asbestos Emission Controls	19	5	29	23	12	14
■ Air Permit	23	56	134	91	47	63

Funding for Environmental Protection and Cleanup

Grant Funding

Ohio EPA provides grant funding for various programs to clean and protect our land, air, and water resources and promote environmentally sustainable practices.

Each year, the Division of Surface Water provides \$0.811 million to six local planning agencies to help with water quality improvements throughout the state.

This year, in addition to the funding shown in the table, the Agency also passed through \$2 million in CARES Act funds to OSU for the COVID wastewater sampling discussed on page 1, and \$0.121 million in Hypoxia Taskforce funding for non-Lake Erie basin nutrient reduction.

Program	Funding
Water Pollution Control Loan Fund Principal Forgiveness	\$39.6M
Water Supply Revolving Loan Account Principal Forgiveness	\$14.8M
Water Resource Restoration Sponsor Program	\$16M
Scrap Tire Recycling and Cleanup	\$0.52M
Mosquito Control Grants	\$0.80M
Vehicle Replacement/Repower Grants	\$22.4M
Section 319	\$3.1M
Brownfield Assessment	\$0.46M
Surface Water Improvement Fund	\$0.18M
Great Lakes Restoration Initiative	\$0.08M
Grand Total	\$97.94M

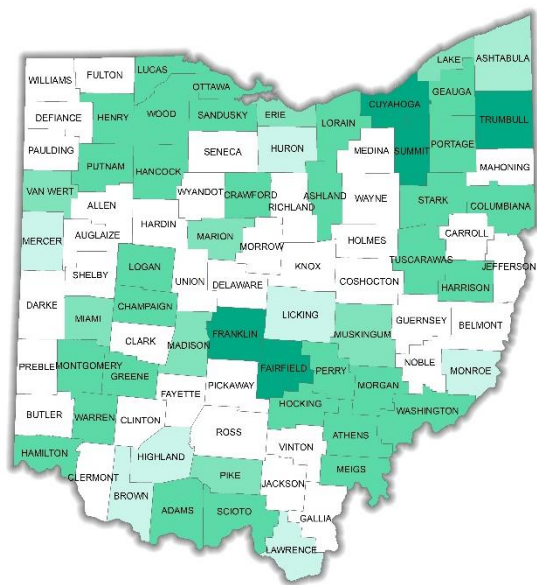
State Revolving Loan Fund Awards

Ohio EPA's state revolving funds, the Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) and the Water Supply Revolving Loan Account (WSRLA), provide below market rate loan financing for public wastewater and drinking water infrastructure projects.

Month	Water Pollution Control Loan Fund	Water Supply Revolving Loan Account
January	\$121.9M	
February	\$28M	\$18.3M
March	\$99.7M	\$38.5M
April	\$25.3M	\$3M
May	\$8M	\$76.7M
June	\$13.3M	\$27.9M
July	\$12.7M	\$8.7M
August	\$25M	\$26M
September	\$41.5M	\$9.4M
October	\$9.2M	\$12M
November	\$46.7M	\$10.6M
December	\$143.3M	\$82M
Grand Total	\$574.8M	\$313.2M

Since these programs began, more than \$12 billion in financing has been provided to Ohio communities for a wide variety of wastewater and water infrastructure projects across the state. This financing has helped improve water quality in Ohio while providing substantial savings to Ohio communities when compared to market rate loan financing.

In 2020, Ohio EPA awarded WSRLA loans totaling \$313 million to help communities address drinking water infrastructure needs. Small, disadvantaged communities and regionalization projects received about \$15 million in principal forgiveness funding. Principal forgiveness acts as a grant in that the principal for the loan does not need to be repaid.



In 2020, Ohio EPA awarded WPCFLF loans totaling nearly \$575 million to help communities address wastewater infrastructure needs. Small, disadvantaged communities received nearly \$40 million in principal forgiveness funding for regionalization projects, unsewered areas, and municipal wastewater infrastructure. The map here shows funding amounts provided through the WSRLA and companion Water Pollution Control Loan Fund program.

Emergency Response

Ohio EPA’s Office of Emergency Response (ER) includes staff stationed throughout Ohio who coordinate with local, state, and federal first responders and support entities on environmental emergencies. Typical environmental response incidents include train wrecks, facility malfunctions, highway crashes, fish kills, chemical releases, and natural disasters. Our team works in partnership with others to minimize and abate the impact these releases cause to the public and the environment.

Our ER teams respond 24-hours a day, seven days a week to incidents across the state. Statewide, Ohio EPA records more than 5,000 incident reports annually through calls to our emergency response spill hotline from citizens, companies, law enforcement, emergency responders, and other agencies.

