



OFFICE OF SENATOR SABINA FLORES PEREZ
Chairperson
Committee on Environment, Revenue and Taxation, Labor, Procurement,
and Statistics, Research, and Planning
I Mina'trentai Siette Na Liheslaturan Guåhan • 37th Guam Legislature

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Senator Perez Advocates for Safe Drinking Water, Environmental Protections, Public Engagement with New Proposed Rules for OB/OD and PFAS

Hagåtña, Guam - On Wednesday, Senator Sabina Flores Perez held an informational hearing with the Guam Environmental Protection Agency (GEPA) to provide the public with updates and clarification on GEPA's progress in upholding their obligations to mitigate health and safety issues surrounding groundwater contamination resulting from sources of dieldrin, PFAS, and the practice of OB/OD by Andersen Air Force base, as well as emergency detonations that occurred recently at the University of Guam.

The hearing also provided information on active public comment periods for federally proposed rules for PFAS and OB/OD that the community can participate in:

- USEPA is holding a **public comment period on the listing of specific PFAS as hazardous constituents** under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), federal law governing the disposal of hazardous waste— **ending on April 8, 2024.**
- USEPA is also holding a **public comment period on newly proposed regulations for open burn/open detonation (OB/OD)** that are **due on May 21, 2024.**

The proposed rule for PFAS would impose additional requirements for polluters and government agencies to investigate and clean up the nine proposed PFAS emerging contaminants, to protect the public and environment from toxic PFAS “forever chemicals.”

The proposed revisions for OB/OD include a *de minimus* exemption for permitted facilities that generate 15,000 lbs Net Explosive Weight (NEW) or less from conducting evaluations on safer or alternative technologies.

“As a marginalized community experiencing disproportionate impacts of militarization, it is not clear that the proposed OB/OD regulations will benefit our island. In particular the *de minimus* provision is concerning as it may prevent the use of safe alternatives, which is what the community has been demanding,” said Senator Perez. “I invite our community to review the proposed regulations and provide comments with the intention of providing the most protection to our people and environment. Considering our unique place in the world, it is important we take advantage of this opportunity to speak about our specific needs, which updated federal regulations do not always capture,” added Senator Perez.

Updates on the implementation of the Zero Waste Act were also sought. One of the core concepts of Zero Waste is reducing the use of non-biodegradables such as single-use plastics, in



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addition to promoting recycling. Guam has a current recycling rate of 38.2%. Additionally, composting food waste and paper can further reduce Guam's intake of garbage by 42%.

GEPA testified that they are piloting a composting program with Guåhan Sustainable Culture and are eyeing larger organic waste diversion through anaerobic digestion.

“With the ongoing fight against climate change, it is time for us to collectively make the conscious decision to prioritize the overall health of the environment and our community. Zero waste initiatives are imperative to accomplish this, through promoting a sustainable culture in which there is less waste, less pollution, and more protections and opportunities for nature and our people to thrive,” Senator Perez stated.

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