

# **Title: Contaminants of Emerging Concern (CEC) Position Statement**

**Date of Approval: April 7, 2020**

**Expiration Date: April 7, 2025**

## **BACKGROUND**

Chemicals exist in trace amounts everywhere in our environment that are derived from many domestic and industrial sources, including plastics, cleaning products, textiles, cookware, farm and garden products, personal care products, and pharmaceuticals. Contaminants of Emerging Concern (CECs) are chemicals that are newly discovered or known chemicals, where evolving information about their potential impacts to human health and/or the environment has prompted further evaluation and investigation. CECs are often also referred to as trace organic contaminants, trace organic compounds, microconstituent, or chemicals/compounds of emerging concern. Some of these CECs find their way into the wastewater stream via drains and toilets. Once they enter water resource recovery facilities (WRRFs) they may be broken down by microbial activity or they may persist in minute quantities in wastewater and biosolids, reentering the environment. For this reason, scientists and the water sector have studied and continue to study their fate, transport, and impact, as well as treatment or mitigation.

## **ALIGNMENT WITH WEF'S MISSION AND CRITICAL OBJECTIVES**

Since 1928, it has been the mission of WEF and its members to protect public health and the environment. This position statement is consistent with our mission and the following critical objectives:

[3c](#): Educate decision makers and elected officials on the infrastructure funding gap and other water policy issues, and engage potential stakeholders

[4b](#): Drive innovation and research in the water sector

## **POSITION**

WEF is concerned about the presence of CECs in our communities. Protecting public health and the environment has always been, and continues to be, the daily mission of water professionals. However, since water utilities and biosolids reuse programs are receivers and *not* generators or users of CECs, they should not be penalized by legislation or regulation. WEF supports:

- Development of timely health and environmental assessments for CECs;
- Development of national science and risk-based standards for CECs;
- Development of better management practices for CECs through source control;
- Continued regulation of biosolids under the Clean Water Act in the United States, or similar regulations in other countries;
- Increased funding for research and development of the appropriate technologies, processes, approaches, and cost-benefit tools to respond to concerns about CECs in wastewater and biosolids;
- Development of approved and certified analytical methods for the analysis of CECs in water, wastewater, and biosolids that provides for consistent and equitable evaluation;
- Ensuring that legislation or regulations to address CECs that impact utilities address implementation costs and provide adequate funding for municipalities to address them.