



IDEM and IU Collaborate on PFAS Project

A Note from the Branch Chief

On March 5, 2026, Governor Braun signed SEA 277 into law, a portion of which clarifies how IDEM evaluates and closes sites by reinforcing a responsible party's ability to use site-specific remediation objectives. Information on establishing remediation objectives can be found in Section 3.3 of the Risk-Based Closure Guide. SEA 277 also updates and streamlines IDEM's statutory authority and improves agency flexibility in reporting by reducing outdated mandates.

With these changes, which began July 1, 2026, IDEM's Remediation Services Branch will continue to provide the oversight and guidance necessary to assure practical and protective environmental site investigations, cleanups and closures.

Kevin Davis ~ *Remediation
Services Branch Chief*



**Dr. Marta Venier, Mike Habeck,
Lynette Schrowe and Ali Meils**

IDEM partnered with Dr. Marta Venier of Indiana University's O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs (SPEA) to develop a data-driven picture of perfluorinated compounds (PFAS) in Indiana. Dr. Venier studies the fate, transport, and behavior of persistent organic compounds such as PFAS. The collaborative effort was supported by Dr. Venier's SPEA graduate students through a capstone project completed in May 2026.

On Jan. 14, 2026, Lynette Schrowe and Mike Habeck from the Office of Land Quality, along with Ali Meils from the Office of Water Quality, traveled to Bloomington to meet Dr. Venier's students and present foundational information for the project.

The IDEM team introduced:

- Datasets from OWQ's Community Water Supply sampling program;
- OLQ's PFAS data compiled from IDEM's Virtual File Cabinet;
- Results from firefighter PFAS blood testing conducted by the Department of Homeland Security;
- OWQ's fish tissue sampling program and associated PFAS data; and
- An overview of IDEM's Risk Based Closure Guide (R2) and the Published Tables.

The project goal was for students to integrate PFAS data from these diverse sources to create a comprehensive overview of PFAS in Indiana and look for any data correlations. Throughout the project, the students had access to subject-matter experts across multiple IDEM programs.

This collaboration supported both IDEM's mission by ensuring the agency has accurate, and complete information needed to protect human health and the environment, and the students' development as emerging environmental professionals.

NEWS and UPDATES

Update to Oversight Costs

To protect the public, IDEM spends public funds conducting investigations of sites impacted with hazardous substances or petroleum and oversees the cleanup of these sites. Pursuant to Indiana Code (IC) 13-25-4-8, responsible parties and program applicants responsible for site characterization and remediation of hazardous substances are required to reimburse IDEM for the oversight and administrative costs incurred over the duration of a project. Administrative costs to be recovered by IDEM include but are not limited to costs associated with site visits and travel time, data collection, internal and external meetings, technical

review, and legal reviews.

Responsible parties in the State Cleanup Program pay into the Hazardous Substances Response Trust Fund as provided in IC 13-25-4-2, and/or IC 13-24-1-4, while program applicants in the Voluntary Remediation Program pay into the Voluntary Remediation Fund as provided in IC 13-25-5-21. IDEM's incurred costs must be paid in full before receiving a No Further Action status from the State Cleanup Program or a Certificate of Completion from the Voluntary Remediation Program.

Since 2013, IDEM's State Cleanup and Voluntary Remediation Programs have billed oversight costs at a rate of \$75 per

hour. Due to these rates not being increased nor adjusted for more than 12 years, and the increasing costs to conduct business, IDEM proposed the rate for the State Cleanup and Voluntary Remediation Program oversight costs to increase to \$100 per hour. IDEM provided a notice to all responsible parties and program applicants with active customer accounts.

In the event a company receives notice that they are a potentially responsible party and later declares bankruptcy, they must include IDEM as a creditor and provide notice of the bankruptcy to IDEM, as IDEM has a potential claim against the company. IDEM reserves the right to

file a proof of claim or an application for administrative expenses in any bankruptcy proceedings.

Failure of a responsible party or program applicant to meet financial obligations may result in referral to the Office of the Attorney General for collections, enforcement action, or termination from the Voluntary Remediation Program, with referral to another program and will delay or hinder issuance of a No Further Action status or Certification of Completion for the site.

Two Remediation Services Employees Win Agency Awards

Last year, IDEM employees were encouraged to nominate a co-worker for one of 14 employee awards. On Nov. 18, 2025, the recipients of each award were announced during an all-staff meeting. Our very own Remediation Services Branch Chief, Kevin Davis, won the Legacy Torch award for his 20+ years of dedicated service and mentorship. The award is presented to a nominated employee who has made a lasting impact on the agency's mission, culture, and legacy, providing leadership and mentorship that shape the agency's future.

Erica Adams, formerly in our Voluntary Remediation Program, won the Heart of the Team award, which honors a person whose daily actions create an extraordinary impact and show that connection, compassion, and character matter as much as performance. Erica brings co-workers together by hosting a book club, organizing group volunteer events, and helping organize fundraisers and other office events. Most recently, she organized an event to pack seeds for the Indianapolis Public Library's Seed Library. In three hours, nine volunteers from VRP and one library employee packed over 3000 seed packs.

DID YOU KNOW?

Indiana Public Law 135 (2026) took effect July 1, 2026, and rewrites portions of Title 13, modernizing statutes that govern IDEM. The law alters language from "shall" to "may," shifting mandatory requirements into discretionary powers in permitting, rulemaking, and enforcement requirements. Also, IDEM decisions will no longer solely rely on federal risk values unless formally adopted through federal rulemaking.

Mandates discretion over enforcement

The bill replaces mandatory directives with discretionary ones. This lets IDEM decide whether to pursue enforcement actions instead of being compelled to do so by the law.

IC 13-14-2-9(d)

This subsection, requiring the board to establish rules for cost recovery related to modifying restrictive covenants was removed to cleanup language that was no longer needed, as the rule had already been established.

The rule (329 IAC 1-2-7) and IDEM's ability to cost recover for expenses incurred in evaluating a proposed modification or termination of a restrictive covenant remains intact.

IC 13-25-5

A proposed voluntary remediation work plan must be submitted within one year after the voluntary remediation agreement is signed. A copy of the proposed voluntary remediation work plan will no longer be required to be placed in a public library in the affected county but instead will need to be published electronically on the department's website. IDEM's commissioner may evaluate the remedial action to verify the action is achieving project goals. If project goals are not met, the commissioner may require modification of the voluntary remediation work plan. If project stakeholders fail to agree to a modification within 180 days, the commissioner or the applicant may withdraw from the program, and the site may be referred to the State Cleanup program.