

Gasification/Pyrolysis: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking



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The United States Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”) published an Advanced Notice of Public Rulemaking (“ANPR”) in the September 8th Federal Register stating its intent to consider developing regulations for pyrolysis and gasification units. See 86 Fed. Reg. 50296.

The ANPR would focus on units used to convert solid or semi-solid feedstocks, including solid waste, biomass, plastics, tires, and organic contaminants in soils and oily sludges to useful products such as energy, fuels and chemical commodities.

The term solid waste would include substances such as municipal solid waste, commercial and industrial waste, hospital/medical/infectious waste, sewage sludge, etc.

Pyrolysis is the heating of an organic material, such as biomass, in the absence of oxygen. Gasification converts carbon-containing materials, under high temperature and pressure, into synthesis gas. These processes can be used to convert waste into products or energy.

The ANPR is exploring the possibility of changes to existing regulations under Section 129 of the Clean Air Act. EPA states it has received inquiries addressing the application of Section 129 to:

... solid waste incineration units and the applicability of such regulations to pyrolysis and gasification units for a variety of processes in feedstock types.

These queries have addressed various processes and feedstocks.

The federal agency speculates that the interest is driven by market trends including a focus on plastics recycling.

EPA believes there is “considerable confusion” as to the applicability of Section 129 of the Clean Air Act to pyrolysis and gasification units. The ANPR is viewed by the agency as a method to understand such units which will assist in the potential development of :

- Future regulations
- Changes to existing Section 129 Clean Air Act regulations

A copy of the Federal Register Notice can be downloaded [here](#).