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EPA to host air permit training for Isles

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The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency wants people to know how to navigate and understand the often complex regulatory structure around air quality permitting and to participate in the process.

To that end, the EPA is hosting Air Permits Training for Meaningful Involvement, an online training intended to inform communities about air permits and their associated regulations.

The training is not focused on any single facility, the EPA said. It is intended to provide communities with resources which will assist them in becoming more involved in the air permitting processes as a whole, the EPA said.



Emily Ferrando of the EPA's Region 4 Air Permits section said participation is important to the process.

"Our hope is that the training will help people understand what they are looking at...and that it will make more sense," she said.

People's comments and participation in the air permitting process will become more meaningful, Ferrando said.

"It's always helpful to have more information," she said.

The Glynn Environmental Coalition is doing its part to get as many people involved as possible. The coalition will host a watch-party of sorts at the Brunswick Library, 208 Gloucester St. in downtown Brunswick, where people can gather and participate in the Zoom session as a group.

“We think this is really valuable information for the community,” GEC Executive Director Rachael Thompson said.

The coalition is awaiting funding from an Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem Solving Program grant from the EPA that will leverage what Thompson calls citizen scientists to test air quality when they believe it is polluted.



If the citizen scientists get a whiff of a nasty smell in the air, they will be able to test it to see what’s in it.

While the EPA’s program on June 4 will focus on regulatory topics, Thompson said the course will offer a great learning opportunity for anyone who wants to be part of the air quality monitoring project.

“It’s relevant information to the work we will be doing,” she said.

The EPA said topics covered in the training will include an overview of the Clean Air Act, general information on the types of air permits, basics of operating permits, the basics of construction permits, opportunities for public participation in the permitting process and resources and tips for commenting and petitioning permits.

Resources for how to make the most of public comments and petitioning permits is Thompson’s favorite part of the program.

“For the EPA to provide that advice is really helpful,” she said. “They’re telling folks how they can meaningfully participate.”

She is thankful the EPA chose to hold the training for people in the Golden Isles.

“They chose communities where they know there are air quality issues or where they know the community is interested in taking action to improve air quality,” Thompson said.

To register for the training, go online to <https://bit.ly/3yxJHEE> or be present at the Marshes of Glynn’s Brunswick Library and participate with the Glynn Environmental Coalition. Thompson said the session will be equipped so that the group at the library can interact and ask questions during the training.



Michael Hall