

## NEHA 2023 General Election Results

Elections are a critical part of the democratic process and are one way in which members have a voice in the running of the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA). Voting members of NEHA have an opportunity to vote for candidates of contested board of directors and regional vice-president positions, as well as cast votes regarding proposed Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws changes. National officers of the NEHA Board of Directors serve a 1-year term in each officer position (second vice-president, first vice-president, president-elect, president, and immediate past-president) for a total of 5 years. Regional vice-presidents (RVPs) serve 3-year terms.

Eligible voters were encouraged to vote during the month of March and the deadline to vote was March 31, 2023. The following are results from the 2023 general election.

### Second Vice-President

There was one qualified candidate for the second vice-president position: Scott Holmes, MS, REHS. Holmes will assume the second vice-president position at the close of the NEHA 2023 Annual Educational Conference (AEC) & Exhibition. As a national officer, Holmes will serve a 5-year term that progresses through the national officer positions and will serve as NEHA president in 2026–2027.

### Regional Vice-Presidents

Our membership is broken down into nine regions that represent U.S. geographic areas, as well as members in the U.S. military and abroad. The terms of three RVP positions expire in 2023—Region 1: Bill Emminger; Region 5: Traci (Slowinski) Michelson; and Region 7: Tim Hatch.

Regions 5 and 7 each had one eligible candidate and did not appear on the election ballot. There were two candidates for Region 1 and our voting members within that region were provided an election ballot to select a candidate. The unopposed candidates in Regions 5 and 7 and the winner of the Region 1 election will assume their RVP roles at the close of the 2023 AEC. Their terms will expire in 2026:

- Region 1: Bill Emminger (represents Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington);
- Region 5: Jaime Estes (represents Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas); and
- Region 7: M.L. Tanner (represents Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee).

A listing of our current national officers and RVPs, along with state breakdowns for each region, can be found on page 38. More information about our governance, including our Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, the election process, and associated deadlines, is available at [www.neha.org/election-process](http://www.neha.org/election-process).

Thank you to all members who participated in the 2023 election!

## Raise Awareness of Local Food Safety

You know more than anyone how important food safety is to the health and economy of a community. That is why the Retail Food Safety Regulatory Association Collaborative is sharing its Food Safety Heroes Campaign with you.

The campaign aims to raise awareness about the value and importance of food safety and food safety professionals by telling food safety stories from local experts across the country. In April, the Collaborative partners started to share video stories across social media. In addition, the Collaborative will be gathering signatures on an open letter that highlights the important work of food safety professionals and calls for support of local health departments. This open letter will become available on the Collaborative website ([www.retailfoodsafetycollaborative.org](http://www.retailfoodsafetycollaborative.org)) to use as a tool when discussing the importance of your work with decision makers in your community.

You are invited to share the videos and messages widely with your local communities, including leaders and decision makers. Visit [www.retailfoodsafetycollaborative.org/food-safety-heroes](http://www.retailfoodsafetycollaborative.org/food-safety-heroes) to watch the videos, sign the letter, and share the message!

## NEHA Releases Best Practice Guide for SAFE-D

Each of the more than 3,000 environmental public health programs across the country collects and manages aquatic information differently. The Standard for Aquatic Facility Environments—Data (SAFE-D) model is a standardized format for publishing aquatic facility inspection information across jurisdictions consistently. The design is based on the critical fields within the Model Aquatic Health Code ([www.cdc.gov/mahc](http://www.cdc.gov/mahc)) and a scan of more than 1,000 environmental health agency inspections. The model has already been tested in four demonstration sites.

The SAFE-D model allows jurisdictions to accurately share and compare aquatic facility inspection data from numerous agencies to:

- make informed decisions,
- share data with your community, and
- advocate for support using data.

Learn more about SAFE-D and access the best practice guide at [www.neha.org/safe-d-best-practices-guide](http://www.neha.org/safe-d-best-practices-guide).

## New Tool Kit Focuses on Top Contaminants in Private Wells

Our new Private Well Contaminant Treatment Tool Kit includes fact sheets for each of the five leading private well contaminants: arsenic, nitrates and nitrites, lead, coliform bacteria, and radon. Each fact sheet describes the health risks posed by these contaminants and the recommended treatments.

You can share the link to the tool kit or print the fact sheets to share with your community and private well owners. This resource was developed in collaboration with the Rural Community Assistance Partnership. View the tool kit at [www.neha.org/private-drinking-water](http://www.neha.org/private-drinking-water).

## NEHA NEWS

**NEHA Government Affairs Updates**

Doug Farquhar, JD ([dfarquhar@neha.org](mailto:dfarquhar@neha.org))

**Recent Activities in Washington, DC**

Doug Farquhar, our director of Government Affairs, visited the office of Representative Robert Aderholt (R-AL). Photo courtesy of Doug Farquhar.

We have been busy advocating for the environmental health profession. Here is a summary of our continued work to promote the interests of our members and the environmental health workforce.

*Meeting With Leadership From the Food and Drug Administration*

We were in our nation's capital the first week of April visiting the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) headquarters in White Oak, Maryland. Executive

Director Dr. David Dyjack, Director of the Entrepreneurial Zone Rance Baker, Director of Government Affairs Doug Farquhar, and Past President Bob Custard had a lengthy meeting with FDA Commissioner Dr. Robert Califf and Principal Deputy Commissioner Dr. Janet Woodcock to discuss retail food safety and the environmental health workforce.

The meeting began as an overview of retail food safety but soon expanded as Dr. Califf and Dr. Woodcock had many questions as to how retail food safety operates at the local level and its relationship with FDA. They were pleased to hear how effective the NEHA-FDA Retail Flexible Funding Model Grant Program operated and the effectiveness of both the FDA model *Food Code* and Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards.

We addressed certain concerns regarding FDA, emphasizing that:

- Retail food safety is performed by state, local, tribal, and territorial agencies.
- The FDA food safety system promotes public health.
- A strong, qualified environmental health workforce is necessary to meet the public health mandate around food and human food needs.

We agreed to work together to advance the joint goal of improving retail food safety in this country.

*Promoting the Environmental Health Workforce Before Congress*

Farquhar also visited Congress in early April to promote the inclusion of the environmental health workforce within the Public Health Workforce Loan Repayment Program.

The Inflation Reduction Act passed last year included a student loan repayment provision for public health workers. The law is being implemented by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). HRSA has the ability to include the environmental health workforce within this loan repayment,

but there are no assurances that HRSA will cover environmental health workers.

We visited the offices of Representatives Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), Andy Harris (R-MD), Robert Aderholt (R-AL), and Mariannette Miller-Meeks (R-IA) to discuss this concern and to request that they agree to sign-on to a letter we are circulating to HRSA Administrator Carole Johnson.

We also visited David Reynolds of the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions. The committee oversees the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and is very concerned about student loan forgiveness and workforce issues. He was very appreciative of our insights into the environmental health workforce.

*Submitting Testimony to Senate Appropriations*

We also submitted testimony in March to the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee, which has jurisdiction over FDA. The message we advocated was that retail food safety is performed by state, local, tribal, and territorial environmental health agencies, the FDA food safety system promotes public health, and a strong and qualified environmental health workforce is necessary to meet the public health mandate around food and human food needs. Corresponding testimony will be submitted to the House Subcommittee as well.

Read the entire blog of our recent activities in Washington, DC, at [www.neha.org/meeting-with-fda-commissioner](http://www.neha.org/meeting-with-fda-commissioner).

**Updates on Legislation**

We recently posted summaries of state legislation introduced so far in 2023 related food safety and climate change and health.

*Food Safety Legislation*

At the halfway point of the 2023 state legislative sessions, 161 bills have been introduced regarding food. The bills cover topics such as cannabis in food, raw milk and dairy, food delivery, food donation, food safety, retail food, manufactured food, meat production, food freedom, nutrition, food deserts, and mobile food delivery. Visit [www.neha.org/2023-state-food-safety-legislation](http://www.neha.org/2023-state-food-safety-legislation) for a summary of enacted legislation, as well as a breakdown of the bills by topic area.

*Climate Change and Health Legislation*

There are approximately 70 bills in the state legislatures addressing climate change and health. Bills have been introduced in the states of Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Hawaii, Illinois, Louisiana, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, and Washington.

Currently, 13 of the bills have failed, none have passed, and the rest remain pending. California and Connecticut had the most bills (13 and 12, respectively), while Louisiana, New Hampshire, and New Jersey had only one bill. Bill topics include climate resiliency, zero-emission vehicles, carbon pricing markets, and climate response, among others. Details on each state's legislation is posted at [www.neha.org/2023-climate-change-health-legislation](http://www.neha.org/2023-climate-change-health-legislation). ❁