

▶ DIRECT FROM NEHA'S AFFILIATES

The Business and Industry Affiliate: Meet One of the National Environmental Health Association's Newest Affiliates

Business and Industry Affiliate

Editor's Note: The National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) is proud to count 46 membership organizations as affiliates. These affiliates are independently governed associations that include 41 states, 2 regions, 2 sector specific organizations, and the past presidents of NEHA. A current listing of affiliates can be found on page 43. NEHA's affiliates represent a grassroots network of environmental health professionals working at the local level to provide education, community, and advocacy for the profession.

The *Journal* is pleased to offer a new column that highlights NEHA's affiliates and shares their work to support local environmental health professionals. Readers will gain a better understanding of the value of these affiliate organizations, as well as insight into the opportunities available through them. The conclusions of this column are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the views of NEHA.

The Business and Industry Affiliate was established in 2015. As of press, it has a membership of 24 individuals. The current president is Alicia Enriquez-Collins. You can view its website at www.nehabia.org.

Introduction

The Business and Industry Affiliate (BIA) is one of the newest affiliates of the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA), committed primarily to supporting environmental health professionals who are nongovernment, consulting, or private sector practitioners. Dedicated teams of volunteers have labored the last 5 years to build an affiliate that can benefit and serve this group of practitioners, who now comprise nearly 20% of NEHA's membership.

Evolving trends among environmental health practitioners, outside of regulatory roles, reveal a need for networking and

strengthened relationships between public and private sectors. Overarching goals among these cohorts are mutual—safeguarding environmental and public health by ensuring consumers and the environment are protected. We are headed in the right direction and have ample room for collaboration and growth. With environmental health practitioners employed across all sectors, there is now a greater need for building networks, establishing relationships, and effecting positive change in day-to-day practice.

Is there pending legislation that will potentially impact your industry and/or consumer? Similar to other NEHA affiliates,

BIA has 501(c) 6 status that affords capacity to support or oppose legislative issues. BIA can work with industry representatives and NEHA to contact legislators and stakeholders to promote environmental health protection. BIA also provides its members with the ability to establish a forum within NEHA and nexus to network across public, private, academic, and nonprofit organizations.

Benefits and Value Added

In business, return on investment is essential as everyone's time is valuable. We also seek return on investment in the volunteer organizations and activities we participate in. What benefits are offered for environmental health professionals through BIA?

Networking and Advocacy

Examples of how BIA can be of value include providing

- a seat at the table, allowing your voice to be heard within NEHA and regulatory agencies across the country;
- access to resources and a network of industry, regulatory, and academic professionals; and
- the ability to advocate for legislative issues that matter to industry.

Professional Development

BIA is committed to providing and supporting professional development opportunities for practitioners across all sectors. You may have attended a BIA-hosted session at NEHA's Annual Educational Conference (AEC) & Exhibition or participated in an interactive webinar. BIA's intent is to share timely technical topics and collaborative strategies to



Attendees of the Business and Industry Affiliate Membership Meeting held at the National Environmental Health Association's 2019 Annual Educational Conference & Exhibition in Nashville, Tennessee, on July 11, 2019. Photo courtesy of Traci (Slowinski) Michelson.

address current environmental health concerns encountered by business and industry.

Webinars and Engagement Opportunities

Examples of educational and engagement opportunities include the following:

- Webinar: Power of Partnerships—Strengthening Agency and Industry Relationships, November 7, 2019.
- Recorded webinar: Boil Water What?! When Good Water Goes Bad (www.neha.org/node/60597).
- Recorded webinar: Coming Clean About Norovirus—How to Dodge the Spread, (www.neha.org/node/60387).
- Mid-Year BIA Meeting, January 30, 2020.
- NEHA 2020 AEC panel presentation: Public and Private Partnerships: Benefits of Engaging Stakeholders for the Long Haul.
- NEHA 2020 AEC exhibition booth: BIA members can network with conference attendees at the booth and display products and promotional materials.

Webinar and session attendees can earn continuing education contact hours toward their NEHA credentials.

Tribute to the Business and Industry Affiliate Founders

NEHA members with 15 or more years of affiliation may recall that there once was a

thriving business and industry consortium, which was dissolved in 2010. Thankfully, a motivated and visionary team of NEHA leaders took the initiative to resurrect BIA! Shelly Wallingford and Dr. Bob Powitz (2017 Walter S. Mangold Award recipient) assembled a membership caucus at the NEHA 2015 AEC in Orlando, Florida. BIA's inaugural board was elected and foundational work began. Stan Hazan, Jaymin Patel, Dr. Bob Powitz, Traci Slowinski, Christine Testa, and Shelly Wallingford combined forces to establish the new affiliate. Incorporation was finalized in January 2016 and BIA achieved 501 (c)(6) status in March 2017.

The BIA board and membership have continued to evolve and have participated in at least one NEHA AEC session every year. BIA sponsored the NEHA 2018 AEC keynote address given by Frank Yiannas and have hosted an exhibition booth at the AEC. So far, BIA has hosted three webinars (as previously listed) with more planned in the coming year.

Meet the 2019–2021 Business and Industry Affiliate Board

The BIA board is comprised of steadfast volunteers with diverse environmental health backgrounds. Board members serve 2-year terms in accordance with BIA bylaws. The current board members are:

- President: Alicia Enriquez-Collins, Steritech
- Vice President: Brian Keller, ABC Home & Commercial Services
- Secretary: Kimberly Pennington, Steritech
- Treasurer: Traci (Slowinski) Michelson, Brinker International
- At Large: Michael Crea, Florida Environmental Health Association; Tracy Graham, Ecolab; and James O'Donnell, That Food Safety Guy

To contact a board member, please e-mail us at nehabia@outlook.com.

Invitation to Join

We continue to see a bright future. BIA can achieve its mission through the active participation of its members. Membership is open to all persons, businesses, and organizations working or supporting environmental health. At \$25 per year, membership dues are a bargain for the resources and benefits available. Consider becoming a member.

Visit www.nehabia.org to review the benefits of BIA membership, view upcoming events, and join our network of industry and regulatory professionals. 🐾

Acknowledgement: The BIA board appreciates the support of NEHA's board of directors, staff, and members.