

NEHA NEWS

NEHA Government Affairs Activities

By Doug Farquhar, JD (dfarquhar@neha.org)

The National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) Government Affairs has been working hard in 2022 to represent and advocate for the environmental health profession. Here is a list of our recent activities. You can also visit the Government Affairs website at www.neha.org/government-affairs to access NEHA-approved policy statements, letters and sign-ons, the Your Insider in Government Affairs Blog, and other information about our activities to inform policy makers on the importance of a well-supported and well-funded environmental health workforce.

Fifth Annual Hill Day

NEHA's fifth annual Hill Day was held on Thursday, March 3, 2022. The NEHA Board of Directors met virtually with 37 congressional offices to discuss the environmental health profession, federal funding of environmental health, and inclusion of environmental health within the Prepare for and Respond to Existing Viruses, Emerging New Threats, and Pandemics Act (PREVENT Pandemics Act). The visits focused on members of the House of Representatives and Senate Appropriations committees, both Democrat (21 office visits) and Republican (16 office visits). This all-day event allowed the board to advocate for the profession, highlighting the challenges it is facing due to COVID-19, the need for support from the nation's federal policy makers, and the decimation of trained staff due to funding cuts and overwork.

The focus this year was on Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) appropriations, highlighting the importance of federal funding for food safety and other environmental health objectives to the state and local environmental health profession. NEHA work is vital as we are the only association that advocates solely for environmental health and the environmental health profession before Congress.

Support for Federal Partner Funding

NEHA has been active in requesting funding for our federal partners regarding environmental health. Letters from NEHA President Roy Kroeger, along with letters from the CDC Coalition, have been submitted to the congressional appropriations subcommittees covering budgets for CDC, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), and FDA for fiscal year 2023 (FY 2023).

National Center for Environmental Health

NEHA sent letters signed by NEHA President Kroeger to both the House of Representative and Senate appropriations subcommittees, as well as signed-onto letters from the CDC Coalition, that cover CDC requesting \$401.85 million in funding for the National Center for Environmental Health (Table 1). One of the foremost line items NEHA supports is the "all other" environmental health activities, which the Biden Administration would like to increase from \$28 million to \$45 million (a 164% increase) to address environmental threats that cause cancer as part of the President Joe

TABLE 1

Federal Agency Funding Requested for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023

Federal Agency	FY 2022 Enacted	FY 2023 Requested
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	\$8,401,000,000	\$11,000,000,000
National Center for Environmental Health	\$228,350,000	\$401,850,000
Climate change	\$10,000,000	\$110,000,000
"All other" environmental health activities	\$17,000,000	\$45,000,000
Asthma	\$30,500,000	\$34,000,000
Lead poisoning prevention	\$41,000,000	\$90,000,000
Environmental Health Tracking Network	\$34,000,000	\$50,000,000
Environmental Health Laboratory	\$68,750,000	\$72,750,000
Food and Drug Administration	\$1,111,237,000	\$1,231,960,000
Center operations	\$344,869,000	\$420,833,000
Field operations	\$766,368,000	\$811,127,000
New Era for Food Safety	–	\$20,200,000
Healthy Safe Food for All	–	\$13,500,000
Emerging chemical and toxicological issues (food)	–	\$19,500,000
Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition	–	\$39,000,000
Office of Regulatory Affairs	–	\$9,400,000

Biden Cancer Moonshot initiative. This increase will expand the discretionary funding available to the National Center for Environmental Health.

Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry

NEHA signed-on to a joint letter with the CDC Coalition to request funding for ATSDR in the FY 2023 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies budget at \$100 million. The letter is addressed to the Senate and House of Representatives Interior-Environment Appropriations Subcommittee leadership.

Food and Drug Administration

NEHA sent letters signed by NEHA President Kroeger to the chairs of the House of Representatives and Senate Subcommittees on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies supporting a \$510 million budget (not including field operations) in FY 2023 (Table 1). The funding would go toward the food safety needs of FDA and would include new money for the New Era for Food Safety and Healthy Safe Food for All initiatives.

Additional Advocacy Efforts Before Congress



Government Affairs Director Doug Farquhar (left) and Executive Director Dr. David Dyjack (right) represent the National Environmental Health Association during a meeting with Senator Patty Murray's office in Washington, DC. Photo courtesy of Doug Farquhar.

PREVENT Pandemics Act

In addition to supporting CDC, NCEH, ATSDR, and FDA environmental health efforts, NEHA is also engaged in other congressional bills.

As part of ongoing advocacy to strengthen and support the public health workforce, NEHA reached out to Senators Patty Murray (D-Washington) and Richard Burr (R-North Carolina), the cosponsors of the PREVENT Pandemics Act (S. 3799), to ensure that environmental health and the profession are recognized in the act.

The act covers many things, including loan forgiveness for public health workers. NEHA wants to ensure that environmental health is included in that section of the act. NEHA also advocated for environmental health to be recognized within sections addressing public health infrastructure and rebuilding the public health workforce.

NEHA Executive Director Dr. David Dyjack and NEHA Director of Government Affairs Doug Farquhar spoke with staff from Senator Murray's office about the importance of including environmental health in the PREVENT Pandemics Act, as well as funding for NCEH. This discussion was important as Senator Murray serves as chair of the subcommittee that oversees the budget for CDC. Dr. Dyjack is scheduled to meet with staff from Senator Burr's office in June.

Environmental Health Workforce Act

It appears that the Environmental Health Workforce Act, a long-standing NEHA objective, will possibly be passed this year, with Representative Brenda Lawrence (D-Michigan) including language within the House of Representatives appropriations bill requesting a study on the environmental health workforce to be performed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. With the appropriations bill being a "must pass" bill, the addition of this language guarantees that the study will be funded.

Other sections of the Environmental Health Workforce Act, including the national environmental health credential, cannot be included in the appropriations bill. NEHA will continue to work to ensure the environmental health workforce remains at the forefront of congressional efforts to reform public health.

Representative Rob Wittman Visits Harris Teeter Store



Representative Rob Wittman (second from the right) tours a Harris Teeter grocery store in Virginia to learn about current food safety practices. Photo courtesy of Doug Farquhar.

NEHA organized a site visit for Representative Rob Wittman (D-Virginia) at a local Harris Teeter grocery store in Williamsburg, Virginia, on Friday, April 22. Representative Wittman, cochair of the Congressional Public Health Caucus, worked with NEHA to include the environmental health workforce within the congressional resolution that recognized and commended public health professionals for their work during the pandemic. During that work, Representative Wittman's office asked if he could visit a retail food facility to learn about and discuss food safety.

After some searching, Harris Teeter came forward and agreed to host the visit. Their Lightfoot Marketplace store in Williamsburg provided the perfect opportunity for Representative Wittman to tour a retail store in his district and learn about current food safety practices. As a former dairy stocker and grocery clerk, Representative Wittman knows and appreciates the retail food safety business and he remembers the effort it took to ensure foods were properly shelved and remained fresh. The dairy case at Harris Teeter gets restocked 3 times each day—it takes many professionals to ensure that milk comes from the processing facility to retailers to consumers in a safe, efficient manner each day.

The store was fully stocked, unlike last year during the pandemic. Harris Teeter noted that an increase in local sourcing from farmers and food processors ensured that products were available. Retailers across the county had trouble restocking imported items

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due to the pandemic and local sources aided in keeping food products on the shelves.

Representative Wittman has a particular interest in seafood. As a former seafood inspector for Virginia, he recognizes the importance of safe packaging of meat products and spoke of biofilm on meats that leads to spoilage. Prior to Congress, Representative Wittman worked with the Food and Drug Administration on its seafood hazard analysis critical control point (HACCP) program. He was involved with the testing of seafood to learn how norovirus, *Listeria*, or other foodborne pathogens emerge and spread in seafood processing facilities.

Representative Wittman has shown a keen interest in ensuring that the nation's retail food safety system remains safe, well stocked, and provides a wide variety of foods to consumers in the U.S. NEHA looks forward to working with Representative Wittman on future public health and food safety efforts.

NEHA Starts Work to Update the Certified in Comprehensive Food Safety Credential

By Eileen Neison (eneison@neha.org)



The subject matter experts working on the job task analysis for the Certified in Comprehensive Food Safety credential take a moment away from all the hard work to capture a group photo. Photo courtesy of Eileen Neison.

NEHA has begun the process to update and overhaul its Certified in Comprehensive Food Safety (CCFS) credential. The CCFS credential is NEHA's food safety manufacturing credential. The CCFS credential is a mark of distinction for more seasoned food safety professionals who aim to demonstrate expertise in the manufacturing and processing areas, whether in a regulatory or oversight role or in a food safety management or compliance position within the private sector. A CCFS credential holder is prepared to manage and evaluate food safety plans in food manufacturing and processing facilities to assure a safe food supply. They are accomplished in understanding and implementing preventative controls, conducting risk assessments, observing and training staff, assessing the physical facility, and assuring corrective measures are applied to control hazards and prevent foodborne illness.

In mid-April 2022, 12 subject matter experts from around the country flew to the NEHA office in Denver to attend and assist with

the job task analysis of the CCFS credential. A job task analysis is the process of studying a job to determine its activities and responsibilities, qualifications necessary for performance of the job, and conditions under which the work is performed. NEHA is doing a complete overhaul of the CCFS credential and this first step will help us develop a blueprint of basic competencies for someone working in or evaluating food manufacturing. This knowledge will then be used to inform the updates needed for the current CCFS credential exam.

Thank you to our amazing volunteers:

- William "Bill" Barriger, Safety Solutions Group, LLC
- Chirag H. Bhatt, HS GovTech
- Rashelly Bland, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
- Robert Buckley, Coca-Cola
- Anne Cooper, Eagle
- Martin Guy Ethy, Sodexo
- Jasmine Hagan, First Watch Restaurants
- Taryn Horr (Polera), Exponent
- Angelica Monarrez, Del Sol Food Company
- Steven Simmons, The Ohio State University
- Edward Suttmiller, Stahmann's Pecans
- Terrin Thomas, Coca-Cola

To learn more about the CCFS credential, please visit www.neha.org/ccfs.

NEHA Staff Profiles

As part of tradition, NEHA features new staff members in the *Journal* around the time of their 1-year anniversary. These profiles give you an opportunity to get to know the NEHA staff better and to learn more about the great programs and activities going on in your association. This month we are pleased to introduce you to three NEHA staff members. Contact information for all NEHA staff can be found on pages 48 and 49.



Dillon Loiza

I obtained a degree in economics in 2016 from Colorado State University, which led me to a few different accounting positions and a labor and employment job before coming to NEHA in August 2021 as an accounts payable specialist. My specialization was in international development but over the last few years, I have become very invested in the effects climate change is having on our environment and how to avoid the worst of it.

NEHA's work in environmental health was very appealing to me and I knew that I could help make a difference by joining the team. Now I help manage our financial relationships with vendors and try to keep the flow of funds going as efficiently as possible for NEHA and our many partners.

I also volunteer with climate action groups, such as the Sierra Club's Beyond Coal Campaign and Citizens Climate Lobby, to help us transition to a carbon neutral future. I love being outdoors, especially when I am rock climbing or snowboarding. When not outside or volunteering, I spend most of my free time researching alternative energies and energy storage technologies such as iron air batteries. I also enjoy reading lots of science fiction and fantasy. I am currently working through *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* and hope that by working with NEHA, I can help prevent any world ending events like we see in the book.



Amber Potts

I became a NEHA member in 2011 when I started my environmental health career. After graduating with a bachelor's degree in chemistry from The University of Texas at Dallas, I was hired by the Garland Health Department as an environmental health specialist. I received my Registered Environmental Health Specialist/Registered Sanitarian

(REHS/RS) and Certified Professional-Food Safety (CP-FS) credentials from NEHA the following year! Along with doing health inspections, I helped run a mobile laboratory where my team responded to emergency situations of unknown chemical substances. I worked there until 2013 when I temporarily moved to Dubai, United Arab Emirates. On my return to the U.S. in 2014, I went back to work for the Garland Health Department.

In 2019 I became the environmental health supervisor for the Environmental Health & Sustainability Department in Plano, Texas. I assisted a team of eight to navigate through COVID-19 obstacles, provided forward momentum in the department's work on the Food and Drug Administration's Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards, and helped host the first Food Safety Summit in Plano. While I thoroughly enjoyed my career at Plano, I was recruited by NEHA in August 2021, where I am a senior project coordinator in food safety.

This position within NEHA has afforded me the opportunity to serve on several committees, including cochair of the Promote Development Team for the Council to Improve Foodborne Outbreak Response (CIFOR) and a voting member for the Conference for Food Protection's (CFP) Allergen Committee. I also get to work on projects such as Epi-Ready, the National Environmental Health Assessment Reporting System (NEARS), and Integrated Food-

borne Outbreak Response and Management (InFORM) Conference. I have recently been accepted into the School of Law at Texas A&M University to pursue a master of jurisprudence in energy and environmental law. I will begin in fall 2022.

I have been trained by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Center for Domestic Preparedness and my favorite training was the CBRNE (i.e., chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive) training at Dugway Proving Ground in Utah. I have conducted thousands of food safety inspections, hundreds of swimming pool inspections, dozens of day care inspections, and a few foster home inspections. I have sprayed miles and miles of roads in the middle of night for vector control, abated numerous stagnant swimming pools, and served as an expert witness in food safety litigations.

I thank Richard Briley, Rachel Patterson, and my friend, the late Jim Dingman, for their support and guidance throughout my career. My love and passion for all things environmental health runs deep.



Alyssa Wooden

I joined NEHA in July 2021 as a project coordinator in Program and Partnership Development. My responsibilities involve managing projects ranging from implementing Health in All Policies programs at state and local health departments to developing an environmental health land reuse training course to improving the use of environmental

health data in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

I am passionate about promoting public health at a community level and advocating for environmental justice and health equity, and my role at NEHA has allowed me to fulfill those passions. Over the past year, I have loved working with public health professionals across the country and helping to provide solutions to some of the most pressing environmental health challenges they face.

Prior to starting at NEHA, I received my bachelor's degree in public health from Johns Hopkins University and a master's in environmental health from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. I am originally from the Boston area but have lived in Baltimore, Maryland, for the past 6 years. I love exploring my city's diverse neighborhoods, restaurants, shops, and parks. In my free time you can find me running, cycling, trying new recipes, watching horror movies, or writing short stories. Reach out if you are interested in learning more about NEHA's Health in All Policies work.

Did You Know?

Interested in learning more about our staff? Visit the NEHA Employee Anniversaries page that shares these important milestones of our staff. We have also posted the staff profiles for each staff member listed. Check it out at www.neha.org/about-neha/work-neha/employee-anniversaries.

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Find Your Community With the Private Water Network



The Private Water Network (PWN) is a free, virtual community of practice for anyone working to protect communities from contaminants in private drinking water sources. Through a virtual, easy-to-use platform, PWN provides a place to exchange ideas and

solutions with professionals working on similar issues and facing similar barriers. The goal is to build a sustainable community for those working to support private water programs to connect with their peers and share experiences, insights, and resources to ultimately build capacity to protect private water quality.

The virtual community platform includes a discussion forum, comprehensive resource library, educational events and webinars on private water issues, newsletters focused on private water issues, and member directory with a community-wide search option. We hope to expand membership to include individuals from every state and territory in the country. We are particularly interested in new members working at state, tribal, local, and territorial governmental public health agencies, federal agencies, national associations, certified laboratories, and academic and extension partners.

Membership to PWN is free. While NEHA membership is not required to be a PWN member, a MyNEHA account (<https://neha.users.membersuite.com/auth/portal-login>) is needed to log in. Learn more and join PWN by visiting <https://pwn.neha.org>.

NEHA History Project Update

By Kristen Ruby-Cisneros (kruby@neha.org)

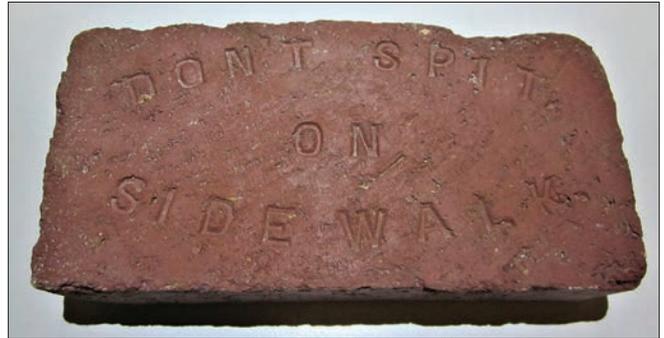
Back in 2020, NEHA President Dr. Priscilla Oliver (2019–2020) appointed the NEHA History Project Task Force to study and review the rich history of NEHA and the environmental health field. The NEHA History Project Task Force was charged with making the important history of NEHA and environmental health available to all NEHA members, as well as other practitioners, students, and the general public. The task force, made up of luminaries from across the environmental health field, has convened since March 2020 to assess the history we have recorded, gather data and historical documents, collect historical artifacts, and review records. We wanted to highlight the work completed by the task force and the endeavors currently underway.

Spotlight on Several Items From the NEHA Virtual Museum

The NEHA History Project Task Force has put together a virtual museum of artifacts, instrumentation and tools, publications, and miscellaneous items from NEHA's and environmental health's past. Thanks to Dr. Robert Powitz, who has provided photos and descriptions from his personal collection, almost 50 different items are now displayed in the NEHA Virtual Museum

at www.neha.org/virtual-museum. The following are just a few of the items on display.

Don't Spit on the Sidewalk Brick



Dr. Samuel J. Crumbine (1862–1954) of Dodge City, Kansas, was one of the leading figures in the field of public health in the early 20th century. Beginning in 1904, he served as secretary of the Kansas State Board of Health for 20 years. Dr. Crumbine was concerned about the spread of tuberculosis and other diseases and campaigned for their prevention. He became particularly concerned after observing tuberculosis patients spitting on the floor of a train. As part of his public health campaign, he convinced brick manufacturers to imprint the slogan, “Don't Spit on the Sidewalk,” on their products.

Dr. Crumbine's public health crusade argued for pure food and drugs, the elimination of houseflies and rats, water and sewage sanitary control, and the prevention of tuberculosis. He succeeded in abolishing the common drinking cup, the common or “roller” towel, and spitting in public places. He promoted these campaigns with simple and easy to remember slogans, such as “Bat the Rat,” “Swat the Fly,” and “Save the Baby.”

The Samuel J. Crumbine Consumer Protection Award was established in 1955 in his memory and is awarded each year to local environmental health jurisdictions that demonstrate unsurpassed achievement in providing outstanding food protection services to their communities.

Food Inspection Set



The Food Inspection Set, Veterinary was issued to members of the U.S. Army Veterinary Corps who were charged with ensuring food safety. The set contained the essential tools to examine packaged foods upon delivery such as a hammer and pry bar, tin snips, awl, two bimetal thermometers, and a pocket ruler. The tools in the set allowed the veterinarian in charge of food safety to inspect food for freshness, temperature, quality, and sanitation before accepting food deliveries. This set dates from the Vietnam War era.

Inspection Mirror



The mirror is an absolute essential in the inspection toolkit. Before the development of the ball hinge, lever hinge mirrors were the available inspection tool. It is a two-handed device where the mirror is articulated using the looped lever-type hinge mounted on the back of the beveled mirror. This meticulously crafted inspection mirror is made of brass (manufacturer unknown) and has a brass sliding cover to protect the mirror. It is probably from the post-World War I era and was salvaged from equipment discarded by the Detroit Health Department.



Chicago Inspection Badges

Chicago, Illinois, had some of the most ornate inspector badges of any large city. The Chicago Health Department was overseen by a board of health and created several first-of-their-kind ordinances in the U.S., including the mandating of milk pasteurization in 1909. The unsanitary conditions of the stockyards and meat-

packing plants in Chicago prompted Upton Sinclair to write his exposé, *The Jungle*, which resulted in the 1906 Meat Inspection and Pure Food and Drug Acts.

The gold badge with the Swiss cross (top left) is from 1900. The badge with the stylized Celtic cross (top right) is from the 1940s. The star badge (bottom middle) is from 1920.

NEHA AEC History

The NEHA Annual Educational Conference (AEC) & Exhibition is the premier environmental health conference that brings together professionals from around the globe to learn and dis-

cuss current and emerging environmental health topics and issues. Each AEC highlights how local agencies, industries, and levels of government work to ensure the safety of the public and environment, and how they contribute to the advancement of the profession.

The first NEHA AEC was held on June 25, 1937, in Long Beach, California. Since that time, NEHA has held over eight decades of AECs in 30 different states, Canada, and Washington, DC. The most AECs have been held in California (14), followed by Colorado (5), Florida (5), Nevada (5), Ohio (4), and Texas (4).

The NEHA History Project Task Force has created a listing of past AECs by decade at www.neha.org/past-aecs. Links to past AEC summaries published in *The Sanitarian* or *Journal of Environmental Health* have also been included. These summaries provide a rich history of the evolution of the AEC, relevant topics within the profession and association, award winners and notables, and images from our past.

Other Projects Underway

The NEHA History Project Task Force is currently working on posting the stories of several “giants” in the environmental health field, including Larry Gordon, Walter S. Mangold, Jerrold M. Michael, P. Walton Purdom, Walter F. Snyder, John G. Todd, and Henry Vaughn. These stories were researched and written by Dr. Herman Koren. As part of his research, Dr. Koren connected with family and friends of these individuals to learn more about their lives and to request review of each story to ensure their accuracy.

The task force also presented at the NEHA 2022 AEC & Exhibition in Spokane, Washington, on June 29. The panel presentation, “Your Profession’s History: Updates From Environmental Health Mentors,” was moderated by Dr. Leon Vinci, chair of the task force, and featured several task force members who shared milestones, stories, and other key developments of the environmental health profession.

The task force is also working on:

- A history of the NEHA affiliates to share their rich stories and impact at the state and local levels.
- A thorough history of NEHA and the environmental health profession from its origins to the present.
- Biography webpages for the past presidents of NEHA to document their achievements and success in making NEHA what it is today, as well as to honor their service and dedication to NEHA and the environmental health profession.

Please visit the NEHA History Project webpage at www.neha.org/neha-history-project for all the resources and information currently posted. You can also find a listing of task force members and how to get involved in this endeavor. Thank you to the task force members for their continued contributions to discover, record, and preserve our history! 🐾