



WSEHA NEWSLETTER

WASHINGTON STATE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

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Summer 2023

AEC WRAP-UP

Whew! AEC 2023 was a great one. For those of you who attended, thank you for bringing your energy and insight. For those who missed it, we hope to see you in Yakima in 2024. Here are some 2023 highlights:

- Over 350 sanitarians attended the AEC – our largest turnout in many years.
- Fabulous plenary sessions, breakout sessions, and field trips.
- A great vibe – we may be biased but it really seemed like everyone was excited to gather and to network in-person.
- A phenomenal International Health Committee auction which raised over \$3500 for Etta Projects.
- Social events added fun to all the serious talk about environmental health.

None of this would have been possible without the work of our planning committee who handled all things. For everything that went well, you can thank our planning committee. To see all of the people who contributed to the 2023 AEC, please check out this link: <https://www.wseha.org/2023-aec>.

Looking ahead to 2024, we hope to see you in Yakima! Thank you for the feedback we've received so far. It's not too late to complete the evaluation if you haven't shared your thoughts.

You'll find the survey here: <https://www.wseha.org/2023-aec>.

- What would you like to learn about next year?
- Do you have a presentation to share with colleagues?
- Local interests, historical stories, or fun gathering space you'd like us to check out?

Don't be bashful about offering constructive criticism – we will use your feedback to make the 2024 conference even better.

The planning committee work begins soon. We welcome new volunteers, especially in the Yakima area, to help make 2024 a great opportunity to learn, network and have a bit of fun.

E-mail Katie Lott (klott@tpchd.org) and Megan McNelly (megan@wseha.org) and they will find a good fit for your talents and availability.

Thank you again to all the attendees and those involved in the making!

See you in 2024!

Tom and Katie

SAVE	2024 AEC
APRIL 29 THRU MAY 1	THE
DATE	YAKIMA @Yakima Convention Center

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Like [WSEHA's Facebook page](#) ! Stay up-to-date with the goings-on in the field of Environmental Public Health.

Another way to keep up with what we're doing is to join our mailing list. Go to wseha.org to join the mailing list or email Megan McNelly at megan@wseha.org.

Next Newsletter Deadline:

Fall 2023

The Washington State Environmental Health Association Newsletter is the official publication of WSEHA. Membership in WSEHA includes a subscription to the newsletter. Membership in WSEHA is not required for acceptance of articles in the newsletter.

Opinions expressed in articles published in the WSEHA newsletter should not be accepted necessarily as statements of policy or opinions of WSEHA.

INTRODUCING SAMMY BERG, PRESIDENT-ELECT

Hello fellow environmental health professionals,

I am honored to serve on the WSEHA Board as President-Elect this year and I look forward to spending the next few years working with the other amazing and dedicated folks that make this organization successful. A quick thumbnail bio of me for introduction: 31 years with Thurston County; currently supervise the Food and Environmental Services Program (food, schools, pools, vector); past assignments have included shore-line OSS surveys, surface and groundwater quality work, and emergency preparedness; I have a BS in chemistry and have been a registered sanitarian since 1995.

My past experience working on the WSBRs and with the AEC Planning Committee has shown me that a little bit of time invested consistently by a group of people really can make the miracles happen, as evidenced by the very successful AEC last month in Tacoma. With the steady participation of a small village of volunteers, we will continue to provide quality training and support for environmental health professionals throughout Washington. If you have ideas or comments about how we can do better in our support role, please contact me at sammy.berg@co.thurston.wa.us.



INTERNATIONAL HEALTH COMMITTEE

The IHC thanks everyone who donated and participated in this year's Silent auction/ Raffle supporting Etta Projects.

YOU helped raise over \$3800.00!

All the funds raised will go toward Etta's aquaponics pilot project. This project, managed by local Bolivian women's cooperatives, aims to eliminate food insecurity in rural communities as well as provide a stable source of income for women.

The raffle basket competition was strong this year. Congratulations to DOH Team Food and Kitsap Public Health District for both winning two years in a row! Which agency is going to take the winning titles from them at year's auction??

Keep an eye out for updates about Etta's aquaponics project and visit WSEHA's [IHC webpage](#) to learn more about past recipients and projects. We look forward to seeing everyone in the IHC room next year for more fun, prizes, and support for next year's recipient!



Donation Acknowledgements:

- Michelle Smith
- Susan Camp
- Hands on Children's Museum
- Seattle Seahawks
- Etta Projects
- Chanelle Lopez
- Whatcom County Health Department
- Alderbrook Resort and Spa
- Mark Toy
- Dayna Katula
- Details Wine Bar
- Milo Durand
- Enigma Escapes
- Nancy Bernard
- Tina Stratton
- Emily Hovis
- Tom Kunesh
- Fremont Brewing
- Away With Words Bookshop
- Starbucks Retail Food Safety Partners
- Museum of Pop Culture
- Marian Bell
- Tacoma Art Museum



- Tacoma Pierce County Health Department
- Kitsap Public Health District
- DOH Team Food
- Jodie Holdcroft
- Seattle King County Health Department
- Thurston County Public Health Department

NEHA Updates

Our sixth annual Hill Day was held on Thursday, February 23. The NEHA Board of Directors and several of our members met with 53 members of the U.S. Congress from both the House of Representative and Senate and both parties who serve on the appropriations committees. These individuals are the decision makers who determine how much funding each federal agency receives.

Overall, 14 members of our board participated, including a new member from New Jersey, members from Texas and California, and two members from Colorado. Other board members from Alabama, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Ohio, and Oregon also participated. Furthermore, our members from the state affiliates in Connecticut and Florida participated to discuss environmental health with congressional offices from their state.

We met with 53 congressional offices, mainly congressional appropriators from the House and Senate (31 Democratic offices and 18 Republican offices). Of the visits, five were from offices in Colorado, five were from Maryland, four were from Alabama, four were from California, and three each were from Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Oregon, Texas and Wyoming. We had two visits to offices from Kentucky, New Jersey, and Utah. One visit was to the office of Senator Patty Murray (D-WA).

Our meetings focused on appropriations to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and National Center for Environmental Health within the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), highlighting the importance of federal funding for food safety and other environmental health objectives to the state and local environmental health profession. Our work is vital as we are the only association that advocates solely for environmental health and the environmental health profession before Congress.

During our meetings, we asked Congress:

- To fund the CDC National Center for Environmental Health at \$300 million and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry at \$95 million
- To fund the FDA Federal and State initiative that funds food safety inspections at \$140 million and \$35 million for states to purchase equipment to serve healthier meals and improve food safety
- To encourage the Health Resources and Services Administration to include environmental health within the Public Health Workforce Loan Repayment Program
- To share with the congressional offices the importance of environmental health to state and local public health agencies

Senator John Barrasso (R-WY) wanted to meet with NEHA Immediate Past-President Roy Kroeger, and was scheduled to join the call. Kroeger noted that Senator Barrasso was an advocate for food safety when he served in the Wyoming state legislature. Other members were highly interested in our activities, especially on red tide in Florida, onsite wastewater in Alabama, and the recent train derailment in Ohio.

In the context of national politics, these visits are essential to any association promoting their profession. Congress pays attention to those groups that actively promote their profession and supports funding for federal agencies and activities that provide for their profession. Congress needs to hear and know that these efforts have an impact on their constituents and communities. *(From <https://www.neha.org/2023-hill-day>)*