AEA

55th ANNIVERSARY

Annual Meeting and Conference

November 16 & 17, 2026
Caesars, Atlantic City

AEA

55 YEARS of Advocacy, Education and Outreach

1970s

1971: Authorities Association of NJ founded.

Advocacy begins on legislative front as AANJ announces opposition to three bills.

A long tradition of keeping members informed begins when AANJ issues 1st edition of newsletter.

Public education and outreach efforts get boost when AANJ is represented on "Jerseyfile" TV show.

1980s

Membership jumps 79% in one year!

Our valuable role in analytical and impact assessment matures when AANJ studies statewide management plan.

We secure 29 amendments to NJ Clean Water Enforcement Act.

1990s

1991: AANJ becomes the Association of Environmental Authorities.

AEA advocacy extends to legal realm when we file amicus brief in change-of-use matter.

AEA presents Wave Awards for Environmental Excellence.

Public education efforts extend to kids when AEA publishes teacher environmental guide.

Going beyond environmental regs, AEA educates members on alternative dispute resolution.

Member service is enhanced when AEA creates member database. We log nearly 100 hours at "Mega-rule" meetings.

2000s

AEA is an audience that matters: Senate President and Minority Leader, plus four other legislators, address conference.

After 9/11, AEA invited to serve on new Industrial Advisory Committee to Domestic Security Task Force and helps develop wastewater security best practices.

Responding to changing needs, we form effluent reuse committee.

AEA/NJWEA collaborate on annual joint session. We offer CD version of commissioner orientation book.



Public education and advocacy efforts come together as AEA publishes brochure on value of authority model of utility service delivery.

We continue to build our reputation as thought leader and representative of public environmental agencies when our president appears on "Caucus NJ" to discuss preserving water resources.

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2016

AEA becomes direct provider of TCHs; AEA and Western Monmouth Utilities Authority cosponsor a pilot training academy.

AEA celebrates 45th anniversary!

2017

After pilot, AEA Environmental Professional Academy is fully launched to great success.

2018

EPDA earns national and state recognition for its uniquely successful approach to preparing future environmental utility managers.

AEA works with NJ Builders to reform connection fees, which permits members to charge pro-rated connection fees for increased capacity.

2019

AEA works with Sen. Bob Smith and many groups to pass stormwater utility law.

AEA's Peggy Gallos authors NJ Spotlight op-ed: Who's Profiting from Repairs to Aging Water and Sewer Systems? It helps establish AEA leadership in opposing unfair aspects of water/sewer privatization.

2020

AEA members provide exemplary, uninterrupted water, wastewater and solid waste service during the COVID19 pandemic.

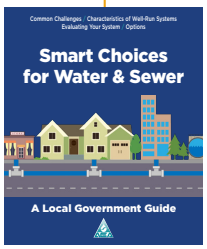


2021

AEA celebrates 50 years!

2022

AEA publishes Smart Choices for Water and Sewer, a guide for local officials.



2023

AEA releases online version of Smart Choices guide.

2024

AEA release cartoon—a humorous picture of how corporate water and sewer costs are beginning to crush NJ residents.

AEA release social media and video public education campaign about PFAS.

2025

New EPDA director Tim Van Pelt succeeds founding director Brian Valentino.

AEA and seven members file objections to NJ's PFAS settlements with 3M and Dupont.

AEA updates its Environmental Authorities Commissioner Handbook. Makes it available for download on AEA website.

2026

EPDA reaches its 10th year! More than 150 have earned an EPDA certificate!

AEA wins important concessions from NJDEP to help protect POTWs and reduce future liability/costs for PFAS.

AEA releases its latest salary and benefits survey, a member service provided for more than 30 years.

AEA celebrates 55th Anniversary!

AEA Annual Meeting and Conference

November 16 & 17, 2026

Caesars, Atlantic City

Monday, November 16

4:00 p.m. | Welcome



Brian Brach, President AEA

4:15 p.m. | Keynote Speaker: "Building a Resilient and Reliable Future for New Jersey's Drinking Water and Solid Waste."



Commissioner Ed Potosnak

Commissioner Potosnak will share his perspective on the future for clean water, wastewater and solid waste utility service in New Jersey.

5:15 p.m. | EPDA Certificate Presentations

6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. | Palladium C | Networking Reception

Tuesday, November 17

8:30 a.m. | Annual Business Meeting



Brian Brach, President

AEA President Brian Brach will conduct the annual business meeting including the election of officers and directors. The proposed slate below will be voted on.

Officers and Directors

President - Brian Brach, Manasquan River RSA
First Vice President - Ron Anastasio, Somerset Raritan Valley SA
Second Vice President - Brian Valentino, Western Monmouth UA
Treasurer – Joann Mondsini, Rockaway Valley RSA
Past President – Justin Flancbaum, Lakewood MUA

Authority Member Director
Mike Witt, PVSC
Bob Snyder, Plainfield Area RSA

Associate Member Director
George Tyler, Tyler, Aversano & Krantz

Voting Procedures

AEA membership is by organization. Our bylaws state that each member organization shall have a voting delegate. The voting delegate is the main contact person listed in the AEA directory. This is usually the executive director -- or could be a commissioner, superintendent. For associate members, it is the person who is our primary liaison, a partner, a vice president, as indicated to us when you join. Those of you who are voting delegates have a yellow ribbon indicating this attached to your badges. If you have that ribbon, you are eligible to vote.

AEA Past Moderator: Joseph Maraziti, Maraziti Falcon

9:15 a.m. | AEA Through the Years





Peggy Gallos, AEA

Joseph Maraziti, Maraziti Falcon, LLP

Through the efforts of hundreds of people over more than five decades, AEA has become the most prominent NJ voice for water, wastewater, and solid waste utility service provided by authorities and other government agencies. Executive Director Peggy Gallos will sit down with AEA Life Member Joseph Maraziti Jr. to observe AEA's 55th anniversary by discussing events and milestones that helped AEA build its influential place in the utility world.

10:15 a.m. | Safe in the Deep End: Confined Space Entry and Gas Monitoring in Wastewater Operations



Janette Kessler, ACUA

This session covers essential safety rules for entering dangerous underground areas at wastewater plants. Attendees will learn how to test the air for toxic and explosive gases, use portable monitors correctly, and follow OSHA guidelines to prevent tragic accidents in low-oxygen environments. Session Highlights include Hazard Identification: Spot toxic gases like hydrogen sulfide. Monitor Usage and terms: Calibration, bump test, and reading portable gas detectors. Entry Rules: Permit requirements and rescue plans. Best Practices: Protect workers during daily plant maintenance.

AEA Present Moderator: Emmanuel Stuppard, Willingboro MUA

11:00 a.m. | Lithium-Ion Battery Safety: Protecting Solid Waste, Drinking Water, and Wastewater Utilities



Steve Adams, Morris County MUA

Lithium-ion battery safety continues to be a trending issue for solid waste utilities. This topic is also relevant to drinking water and wastewater utilities. The presentation includes best practices for the safe handling and disposal of lithium-ion batteries.

11:30 a.m. | Break

11:45 a.m. | PFAS Past to Present



Brian Brach, Manasquan River RSA

Historically, PFAS ("forever chemicals") were widely used in industrial processes and consumer products throughout New Jersey before their persistence and potential health risks were fully understood, resulting in contamination of some groundwater and drinking water supplies. Today, New Jersey is a national leader in PFAS regulation, with enforceable drinking water standards, expanded monitoring requirements, treatment upgrades, and ongoing remediation efforts to reduce public exposure and protect water quality.

12:15 p.m. | Lunch – Palladium C

1:45 p.m. | Pursuing Congressionally Directed Spending: Strategies for Success





Mike Witt, PVSC

Joe Sesto, Sussex County MUA

Under the process of Congressionally Directed Funding or Community Project Funding (once called "earmarks"), members of Congress can request federal funds for specific projects. While this funding is not a substitute for the I-Bank, CDF/CPF funds may help provide supplemental funds for projects and may help reduce the burdens on ratepayers. The speakers will discuss how this process works and provide attendees with helpful tips about how to apply for it.

AEA Future Moderator: Raquel Dunn, Bayshore Regional SA

2:30 p.m. | AI in Water Operations: What's Actually Working - and What Isn't



David Lynch, Klir

AI is everywhere in the water sector. But for utility leaders, the challenge isn't deciding whether AI matters - it's separating what is genuinely useful from what is simply hype. Rather than focusing on futuristic use cases or technical demonstrations, Jennifer will explore what AI adoption actually looks like in water operations today: where it is creating meaningful value, where expectations are getting ahead of reality, and what utilities need to have in place to benefit from it.

3:15 p.m. | The Hidden Profit of a Multi-Generational Workforce: Strengthening the Human Infrastructure Behind Every Environmental Authority



Krishna Powell, Founder & CEO, HR 4 Your Small Biz

While environmental authorities are investing in infrastructure, technology, and regulatory excellence, one of their greatest challenges is ensuring they have the leadership capacity and workforce to sustain that infrastructure for years to come. Across the country, environmental authorities are navigating a historic workforce transition. Experienced employees are retiring, institutional knowledge is walking out the door, supervisors are leading four generations with different expectations and communication styles, and organizations are expected to embrace innovation while maintaining operational excellence, public trust, and regulatory compliance. These aren't simply workforce challenges. They're organizational performance challenges. The presenter will talk about those challenges.

4:30 p.m. | Door Prizes

Available CEUs

CMFO 1.0 Office Management and Ancillary Subjects
CCFO 1.0 Office Management and Ancillary Subjects
CTC 1.0 General/Secondary, CPWM 1.0 Government
RMC 1.0 Professional Development
QPA 1.0 Office Admin./General Duties
18191-1 - Keynote Speaker - Commissioner Ed Potosnak
18191-2 - History of AES Presentation
18191-3 – Safety Presentation
18191-4 – PFAS Past to Present
18191-5 - Lithium-Ion Battery Safety: Protecting Solid Waste, Drinking Water and Wastewater Utilities
18191-6 - Pursuing Congressional Funding: Strategies for Success
18191-7 - AI in Water Operations: What's Actually Working - and What Isn't
18191-8 - The Hidden Profit of a Multi-Generational Workforce

ABOUT OUR PRESENTERS

KEYNOTE

Ed Potosnak is the Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, leading the state's efforts to protect the environment and public health, while growing the economy. As part of Governor Mikie Sherrill's Mission to Deliver, he is responsible for continuing DEP's progress to advance New Jersey's resilience to flooding and extreme weather, addressing toxic chemicals such as PFAS, cleaning up contaminated sites and, importantly, streamlining the environmental permitting process. Before joining DEP, he served as executive director of the environmental group, New Jersey LCV, and early in his career, taught high school chemistry. A New Jersey native, Commissioner Potosnak graduated from Rutgers University with a bachelor's degree in chemistry and a master's degree in education.

Steve Adams is the hazardous and vegetative waste manager for the Morris County MUA. He has spent the last twelve years working in the solid waste industry in both the public and private sectors. For the past four years, Steve has also held the role of President of the Association of New Jersey Household Hazardous Waste Coordinators. He is passionate about protecting the environment, volunteers actively with 11th Hour Rescue, and sings in a 70's rock cover band.

Brian Brach serves as executive director for the Manasquan River Regional Sewerage Authority and has over 16-years of experience in the water resources industry. Leading the day-to-day operation of a regional sewerage authority, in combination with a decade's worth of consulting engineering experience, has provided Mr. Brach with valuable exposure to all facets of water utility operations and administration. Mr. Brach is a licensed Professional Engineer (NJ PE), Qualified Purchasing Agent (QPA) and Certified Municipal Engineer (CME). Mr. Brach leverages his passion for the industry to address challenges in an efficient and innovative manner. Mr. Brach is a member of AEA's executive committee and serves as president.

Raquel Dunn has been the administrative assistant/human resources representative at the Bayshore Regional Sewerage Authority since September of 2023. Prior to that, Raquel worked for a commercial law firm as a paralegal for four years, during which time her role was expanded to include personnel duties such as vetting and interviewing job candidates, and eventually training new hires. Raquel has a Corporate Communications degree from CUNY Staten Island and became a Certified Professional of the Society for Human Resource Management ("SHRM") in 2025. Raquel is the chairperson of AEA's Human Resources Committee.

Peggy Gallos is the executive director of the Association of Environmental Authorities of NJ. Ms. Gallos began her career as a journalist, covering New Jersey local, county and state issues. She ran her own communications consulting firm, working for local governments, associations, and corporate clients. In 2005, she joined the staff of the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities as a speechwriter and later working on energy policy. Ms. Gallos worked on federal energy efficiency matters through the National Renewable Energy Laboratory and helped launch a sustainability consulting firm. Her public service includes six years on the Milford Board of Education, three as its president. She served on the boards of the Milford Public Library and Literacy Volunteers of Hunterdon County. Peggy has a bachelor's degree from New York University and a master's degree in public administration from Rutgers University.

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ABOUT OUR PRESENTERS

Janette Kessler is Safety and Risk Manager for Atlantic County Utilities Authority and is Insurance Commissioner serving on the Atlantic County Insurance Commission and the NJ Counties Excess Liability Insurance Fund. She serves as Safety Committee Chair for the Atlantic County Insurance Commission and Claims Committee Chair for the Atlantic County Insurance Committee and is a member of the Coverage Committee for the NJ Counties Excess Liability Insurance Fund. She has worked as a Risk Manager for over 20 years in various industries. Janette specializes in insurance procurement, training, safety and claims adjustment for various coverages including Workers Compensation, Bodily Injury, Auto Liability, Property, EPL and UST. Janette has a degree in Paralegal Sciences and has served on the National Federation of Paralegals Ethics Committee. In her spare time, Janette serves as Chair of the Brigantine Green Team - a Sustainable Jersey Bronze Certified municipality, is Chair of the Safety Committee for the Association of Environmental Authorities and acts as a Post Advisor to the Explorers Program.

David Lynch is the Co-Founder & CEO of Klir, built on a simple idea: utilities can't afford to lose the operating knowledge that keeps critical programs running. Klir protects the procedures, ownership, evidence, and decision history that tell a utility how to operate, how to respond, and how to prove it's ready — turning scattered records and institutional memory into repeatable, defensible work. Prior to founding Klir, David worked with the Irish Environmental Protection Agency to develop license and permitting workflow management systems, as well as the development of their technical architecture, strategies and systems to meet the Water Framework Directive and associated daughter directives.

Joe Maraziti represents both public and private sector clients in regulatory, transactional and litigation matters having local and national significance involving environmental and redevelopment issues. He has many years of experience representing public sector clients throughout New Jersey in redevelopment projects, condemnation, land use, real estate transactions and litigation in federal and state courts. He is well-versed in redevelopment law. With decades of experience in legal issues related to infrastructure and the environment, Mr. Maraziti is an active leader and driving force in the redevelopment arena. He served as Chairman of the New Jersey State Planning Commission, which adopted the State Development and Redevelopment Plan in 2001. In that role, he worked with the Governor's cabinet, counties, local communities and the private sector to ensure that development and redevelopment in New Jersey enhance the quality of life for all citizens. Mr. Maraziti is a long-time member of AEA and was awarded life member designation in 2023.

Krishna Powell known as "The Multi-Gen Leader," is the Founder & CEO of HR 4 Your Small Biz with nearly 30 years of experience coaching leaders and developing talent across the U.S. and internationally. She specializes in helping organizations recruit, retain, and lead multigenerational, multicultural workforces through practical, real-world strategies. A highly successful EEOC mediator with a 97% resolution rate, Krishna also resolves workplace disputes privately and serves as a keynote speaker and licensed Franklin Covey facilitator. Through customized workshops and globally recognized programs, she helps organizations strengthen communication, morale, leadership, and change management.

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ABOUT OUR PRESENTERS

Joseph Sesto is Executive Director at Sussex County MUA, and oversees the administration, finance, and technical aspects of multiple wastewater facilities as well as Solid Waste Facility that serve the Sussex County residents and businesses. He is committed to ensuring the highest standards of quality, safety, and compliance, as well as fostering a culture of collaboration, learning, and excellence among their team and partners.
In his role as Chief Engineer, he provides engineering support for the successful operation and maintenance of SCMUAs infrastructure. He led the design and implementation of several projects such as the Stage 2 Landfill Expansion, Leachate PS and FM, Franklin PS Rehabilitation, and Hamburg PS Rehabilitation. He leveraged his skills to optimize the performance and cost-effectiveness of the engineering solutions and coordinated with the Board of Commissioners, contractors, regulators, consultants, and customers, to ensure timely and satisfactory delivery of the projects.

Emmanuel Stuppard is a seasoned infrastructure and operations executive with more than a decade of experience leading complex municipal utility systems, large-scale capital programs, and multidisciplinary teams. As the Executive Director of the Willingboro Municipal Utilities Authority, he serves as the organization's chief executive officer, guiding strategic planning, regulatory compliance, financial stewardship, and the delivery of safe, reliable water and wastewater services to the community.
With a strong engineering foundation and extensive leadership experience, Emmanuel oversees all facets of utility operations- from treatment facilities and distribution systems to emergency preparedness, customer service, and long-term capital planning. He works closely with the Board of Directors, government agencies, and community stakeholders to ensure transparent decision-making, system resilience, and sustainable infrastructure investment.

Mike Witt is the General Counsel for the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission (PVSC). One of the oldest dedicated environmental agencies in the United States, PVSC provides wastewater service to over 1.5 million residents located 48 municipalities throughout northeastern NJ. Prior to becoming General Counsel, he was in private practice and served PVSC for 19 years as Special Environmental Counsel, representing PVSC in regulatory and litigation matters with both US Environmental Protection Agency and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. In addition to environmental law, his 25 years of law practice has included government entity representation, appellate practice, intellectual property, and government information requests, among other areas.
In addition to serving on the National Association of Clean Water Agencies' (NACWA) Board of Directors, Mr. Witt is a member of NACWA's Legal Affairs Committee, has given presentations at a number of NACWA events, and is a member of the Editorial Board for NACWA's Wet Weather Consent Decree Handbook.

THANK YOU TO OUR KNOWLEDGEABLE PRESENTERS SPEAKING AT OUR AEA ANNUAL MEETING AND CONFERENCE.

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Congratulations to the 2026 EPDA Cohort

Anthony Allen, Willingboro MUA
Robert Barber, Willingboro MUA
Ryan Bowers, Ocean County UA
Michael Campanile, Western Monmouth UA
John DePaola, Township of Ocean SA
Matthew Duda, PVSC
Christopher Eddy, Stony Brook RSA
Daniel Edgeworth, Eatontown SA
Alvaro Garcia, PVSC
Sharon Gower, Manasquan River RSA
Katie Herr, Atlantic County UA
Michelle Hu, Eatontown SA
Pawel Jakobik, PVSC
Katherine Kennedy, Jackson MUA
Pam Krijger, Parsippany-Troy Hills WWTP
David Krusznis, Ocean County UA
Daniel Mangieri, PVSC
Zachary Martin, Ocean County UA
Melanie Peltz, Western Monmouth UA
Krishna Polius, PVSC
Stan Russ, Jr., Atlantic County UA
Ted Sgro, Rockaway Valler RSA
Santino Timpani, Stony Brook RSA
Megan Torres, Jackson MUA
Ryan Trapp, Ocean County UA
Tina Vallecillo, Manasquan River RSA
Niyati Vyas, PVSC



Submit a Nomination for 2027 Wave Awards.

Nominations materials available starting in December at www.aeanj.org.

Deadline for submissions Friday, March 5, 2027.

2027 Spring Meeting

The AEA Spring meeting will again be a single, day-long event.

Join AEA to hear great speakers and celebrate achievement at the Wave Awards Luncheon on Thursday, April 22, 2027 at the National Conference Center in East Windsor, N.J.



Thank you to the AEA Education and Conference Committee for putting together a timely and informative conference program.

The committee members are:

Bill Gettings, chair, Alexa Alverio, Ron Anastasio, Brian Brach, Bernie Bujak, Tom Horn, Patricia Lindsay-Harvey, Manuel Ponte, Dr. Apryl Roach, John Scheri, Bob Shertenlieb and Brian Valentino.

The committee was supported by:

AEA staff, Peggy Gallos, executive director, and Karen Burris, office manager, and by Lorna O'Hara and Tammi Kleszics from Princeton Public Affairs Group.

Chairs:

Ron Anastasio, 1st Vice President
Brian Valentino, 2nd Vice President

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