

WWEMA 2024 FINANCE & CONTRACT ADMINISTRATION MEETING

SPEAKER BIOS

[Alexander Bandza, Partner, Barnes & Thornburg](#)



Alex Bandza is a partner in the Illinois offices of Barnes & Thornburg. He is vice chair of membership, former chair and former vice chair of electronic communications for the American Bar Association Section of Environment, Energy and Resources' Constitutional Law Committee and vice chair of membership for the ABA Section of Environment, Energy and Resources' Science and Technology Committee. Alex defends toxic tort and wrongful death claims arising out of alleged environmental and workplace exposures; CERCLA, RCRA and common law claims arising out of alleged environmental contamination; and OSHA citation and enforcement actions arising out of alleged workplace harms or exposures.

He also counsels clients in evaluating and responding to alleged environmental misconduct in federal criminal investigations. Additionally, Alex has significant experience before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), including several matters under the Federal Power Act specific to renewable energy, distributed generation, energy efficiency, reactive power, and energy transmission. He also advises on the energy regulatory-related aspects of corporate transactions, especially in the private equity space. Alex earned his J.D. from the University of California, Berkeley School of Law and his B.A. in economics and interdisciplinary honors in environmental science, technology and policy from Stanford University.

[Mark Blankenship, CPCU, AIC, LEED AP, Director of Risk Management, Willis Towers Watson \(WTW\) A&E](#)



Mark Blankenship is the Director of Risk Management for Willis A&E. Mark uses his 25 years of experience in A&E professional liability as a claim supervisor, underwriter and broker to provide risk management advice and educational presentations to architectural, engineering and construction clients. In addition, he provides contract review guidance and claims advocacy support. Willis A&E is the Center of Excellence for WTW exclusively dedicated to providing risk management and insurance solutions to design professional firms in North America. Mark earned the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Accredited Professional (or LEED AP) accreditation for the U.S. Green Building Council, a Chartered Property Casualty Underwriter designation from the American Institute for Property Casualty Underwriters, and an Associates in Claims degree from The Institutes.

[Tim Connor, Senior Chemical Engineer, U.S. EPA Office of Wastewater Management, Water Infrastructure Division](#)



Tim Connor is a Senior Chemical Engineer in the Office of Wastewater Management (OWM) in EPA's Office of Water. For the past ten years, Tim has served as lead for the successful domestic preference programs of the Clean Water State Revolving Fund. Prior to joining OWM, Tim led engineering and economic analysis development for EPA's water quality standards and industrial effluent guidelines programs. Before joining EPA, Tim was a defense contractor and a drilling engineer. Tim holds a B.S. in Chemical Engineering from the University of New Mexico and a M.S. in Environmental Science Engineering from Clemson University.

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Zachary Jones, ACEC, EJCDC Counsel



Zachary Jones is a seasoned attorney dedicated to serving the needs of clients in the real estate development, design, and construction industry as well as companies doing business with government entities. In addition to his private practice, Zach serves as General Counsel to the Engineers Joint Contract Documents Committee (EJCDC). Zach prefers to help clients avoid disputes by advising them on contracts and risk management. He has experience assisting clients involved with traditional design-bid-build projects, as well as more specialized contract structures like design-build, P3, and IPD. Zach has worked on projects ranging from roads and pipelines to commercial, industrial, and residential developments. He has represented owners, architects, engineers, contractors, and manufacturers, giving his clients an advantage by understanding the interests, risks, and incentives of all project participants.

Zach is active member of the Tennessee, Kentucky, and American Bar Association. He was elected to serve as a member of the Tennessee Bar Association house of delegates and as a fellow of the American Bar Foundation. In addition, Zach serves on a number of committees, including the Legal Counsel Forum and Risk Management Committee of the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC); the Claims Avoidance and Claims Reduction and Management Committee of the American Society of Civil Engineers; and the ABA Forum on Construction Law Division 6 steering Committee. Zach earned his J.D. from the University of Memphis and his B.A. from Trevecca Nazarene University.

Lisa Kursell, Engineer of Treatment Plant Operations, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD)



Lisa Kursell is the Engineer of Treatment Plant Operations at the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD). She has worked with the MWRD for over 26 years in a variety of roles in the Maintenance and Operations (M&O) and Engineering Departments. Lisa oversaw the Mechanical Design Section of the Process Facilities Division of the Engineering Department for five years prior to moving back to M&O in 2022. She is the Maintenance Manager at the Stickney Water Reclamation Plant and serves as the District's JOC Contract Coordinator.

Erika Powers, Partner, Barnes & Thornburg



Erika Powers is a partner in the Illinois offices of Barnes & Thornburg. Erika's clients include municipalities, utility districts, trade organizations and other regulated parties across the country. She advises on a wide variety of Clean Water Act (CWA) issues, including wet weather management and wastewater treatment. She also assists clients with matters involving water quality standards, the listing and delisting of impaired water bodies, TMDL development and implementation, effluent limitations guidelines for wastewater discharges, and water permitting, compliance and enforcement.

Notably, Erika provides veteran legal counsel regarding regulatory matters involving state and federal environmental agencies, as well as CWA administrative and judicial litigation. She advocates to support her clients' interests in water quality rulemaking and policy development, crafts strategies to achieve client objectives while maintaining compliance with water quality regulations, helps clients contest agency decisions in federal and state courts, and defends clients against citizen suits and agency enforcement actions seeking damages and penalties. Erika is a regular invited speaker and educator on municipal and industrial Clean Water Act issues at legal and professional associations and community groups across the country. She earned her J.D. from the University of Michigan Law School and her B.A. from Alma College.