

Name:

Richard A. (Chet) Wayland

Title:

Retired

Company:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

City/State:

Durham, North Carolina

Join Date:

1991

Section/Chapter:

New England Section

Education/Professional Credentials:

B.A., M.S. Environmental Sciences, University of Virginia, 1983, 1985

Biographical Summary:

Richard A. (Chet) Wayland has served for over 40 years in the air quality professional arena with most of that time being employed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards (OAQPS) in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina.

After receiving his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Environmental Sciences from the University of Virginia, Chet started his career in the air quality modeling field, first serving as a consultant to EPA before joining EPA's Source Receptor Analysis Branch in 1991. As co-chair of the Emissions Inventory Workgroup, he was instrumental in developing key components of the technical analyses for the highly successful Ozone Transport Assessment Group, a landmark effort to identify and address ozone transport issues across the eastern United States.

In 1996, he was selected to lead the Information Transfer Group within OAQPS, where he started the AIRNow program, the first real-time national air quality program in the United States. Partnering with state, local, and tribal monitoring agencies across the country, Chet led this voluntary effort to establish a way for citizens to be informed about their current air quality and to be able to take actions to limit their exposures on poor air quality days. Using the Air Quality Index (AQI) that was established as part of the AIRNow program, he created a culture where it became commonplace for people to know what a code orange or code red air quality day meant. AIRNow recently celebrated its 25th year of operation and has added enhancements over the years such as an international component and the Fire and Smoke map that has been so beneficial to communities impacted by wildfires.

Chet was selected into the Senior Executive Service in 2005 to lead the Air Quality Assessment Division (AQAD) within OAQPS. In this role, Chet worked closely with state, local, and tribal air agencies across the country as well as the regulated community to provide technical tools, key datasets, and innovative solutions to challenging air quality issues to aid in the successful implementation of the Clean Air Act.

He led the development of the first near-road ambient monitoring network for NO₂ and PM_{2.5} in the United States. He was instrumental in responding to numerous environmental disasters including Hurricane Katrina and the Deep Water Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico coasts areas. He led the expansion of the National Air Toxics Trends monitoring network and helped conceive of the analytical approach for the AirToxScreen annual reporting program that provides key data and health risk information to communities across the country.

In 2015, Chet received the Senior Executive Service Meritorious Executive award for his sustained superior accomplishment in the management of programs of the United States Government and noteworthy achievement of quality and efficiency in public service. In 2024, he received the Air and Waste Management Association's (A&WMA) S. Smith Griswold Outstanding Air Pollution Control Official Award.

Chet retired from EPA in December 2024 and continues to engage in air quality issues on a private basis and through his membership in A&WMA.

A&WMA Activities and Offices Held:

Critical Review Committee, 2024-present (Chair, 2026)

Publications Committee, 2026

Goals/Vision for the Organization:

As a young professional in 1991, I joined the Air and Waste Management Association (A&WMA) because I thought it would be a great way to enhance my career, meet fellow scientists and be a part of, frankly, the only professional organization that was about what I wanted to do in my career. Now 35 years later, I can attest that A&WMA has provided all those benefits to me.

Looking to the future, I see a different world than I did in 1991. Today, young and mid-career professionals have so many distractions in their lives that they often overlook some of the tried-and-true mechanisms we all have enjoyed for decades. I believe we need to continue to market the Association to our younger and mid-career scientists and engineers and provide a platform where they can share their cutting-edge research. The Association provides a unique setting where the regulatory, regulated and academic communities can co-exist to share the latest science around air and waste issues. This is cherished space and it should continue to be nurtured.

My goal/vision for the Association is to see the organization be sustainable for the long-term and to continue to foster this incredible collaborative spirit that the Association has provided for me and others for many decades.