

**Plastics Advisory Council**  
**Bottle Redemption Meeting – Tuesday, March 26, 2024**  
**Panelist Biographies**

**Elizabeth Balkan, Director, Reloop NA**

Elizabeth Balkan brings extensive public policy and strategy experience to her role as Director, Reloop North America, which works to advance an array of policy measures to increase packaging circularity. She previously led the food waste program at the Natural Resources Defense Council, growing the Food Matters cities initiative to include over 40 cities nationwide. Before that, Balkan developed and oversaw implementation of New York City's zero waste plan, working first in the Mayor's Office and then at the NYC Department of Sanitation. Before working in city government, Balkan worked as a private consultant for international NGOs and clean tech investors and spent over a decade living and working in China. She and her family live in Brooklyn.

**Susan Collins, President, Container Recycling Institute**

Susan Collins is President of the Container Recycling Institute and has worked on recycling and sustainability issues for more than 30 years. She leads CRI's research and works with environmental organizations, activists, and governments around the world to educate on the benefits of packaging recycling. Ms. Collins has testified before the legislatures of 14 U.S. states and territories as well as the U.S. Senate and has been quoted in dozens of US and local newspapers. She is a former board member and Treasurer of the National Recycling Coalition and the California Resource Recovery Association. She holds degrees in Manufacturing Engineering from Boston University and Business Administration (MBA) from the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA).

**Megan Daum, Vice President, American Beverage Association**

Megan Daum is the vice president of sustainability at the American Beverage Association (ABA), where she oversees the industry's sustainability programs, policies and activities. Prior to joining ABA, Megan was the vice president of sustainability at the Can Manufacturers Institute (CMI), where she headed the sustainability program for thirteen years. She has sat on various U.S. and International Committees on packaging, policy, and sustainability. Megan was born and raised in New Jersey and graduated from Columbia High School in Maplewood. She has a master's degree from the University of Vermont and lives in Washington DC.

**Wayne DeFeo, Principal, DeFeo Associates**

Wayne DeFeo is the principal and founder of DeFeo Associates; a full - service Environmental Consulting firm that provides clients with environmental expertise with a strong emphasis on Environmental Sustainability.

Wayne specializes in the development of sustainable solutions for commercial, institutional and residential buildings, including every component of building operation without forgetting the

most important part of the building, the people in it. He helps to develop environmentally friendly purchasing policies, energy reduction strategies, LEED building practices, recycling and solid waste handling systems and bid specifications for numerous municipalities within New Jersey.

Wayne has worked on multiple LEED certified projects that have obtained Silver or better ratings. He has helped many companies reduce their energy consumption and reduce their environmental footprint by reducing disposal of all waste types. While Executive Director of the New Jersey Chapter of the US Green Building Council Wayne guided the Chapter to a new level where it is now a region within USGBC.

He has been recognized as an environmental expert in both state and federal court and within multiple state legislatures. He has several published works on environmental issues including Practical Recycling Economics. Wayne served as Vice Chairman & Commissioner on the Interstate Environmental Commission and continues to serve as a Faculty Coordinator at Rutgers University School of Continuing and Professional Education. In 2022, Wayne was appointed to the Food Waste Recycling Market Development Council by the Governor.

He has a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology and a Master of Arts degree in Environmental Studies from Montclair State College (University). He is a Certified Teacher of Science and a LEED Accredited Professional and a New Jersey Certified Compost Facility Operator. He has received numerous awards for his contributions to the environmental field.

Wayne currently serves as Secretary of the Somerset County New Jersey Energy Council, is a member of the Board of Directors for the Association of New Jersey Recyclers and the Recycling Certification Institute.

### **Judith Enck President, Beyond Plastics**

Appointed by President Obama, Judith served as the Regional Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency overseeing environmental protection in NY, NJ, 8 Indian Nations, Puerto Rico, and US Virgin Islands. Working with a staff of 800 and managing a \$700 million budget, Judith secured a number of environmental accomplishments during her tenure at EPA. She has worked on environmental and energy issues related to Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico and the U S Virgin Islands, serving on the Governor's Hurricane Recovery and Resiliency Advisory Committee in the US Virgin Islands.

Judith previously served as Deputy Secretary for the Environment in the New York Governor's Office and served as a Policy Advisor to the New York State Attorney General. Prior to that, she was Senior Environmental Associate with the New York Public Interest Research Group. She also served as the Executive Director of Environmental Advocates of New York. She is a past President of Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, former Executive Director of the Non-Profit Resource Center, and a designer of her town's rural recycling program. She is panelist on the "Roundtable" a public affairs radio show WAMC, an NPR station in upstate New York. She was appointed to the New Jersey Plastics Advisory Council by the Governor of New Jersey.

### **JoAnn Gemenden, Executive Director, New Jersey Clean Communities Council**

JoAnn Gemenden is in her third year as Executive Director of the New Jersey Clean Communities Council where she was tasked with implementing NJ's statewide outreach and education program for the single use plastics law and supplying 500,000 reusable bags to the state's seven food banks. Prior to being named to this post, JoAnn served as the Bureau Chief of Recycling in Union County for 35 years where she was both Recycling and Clean Communities Coordinator. She has vast experience in environmental education and works to promote behavior change when it comes to keeping NJ litter free and reducing our reliance on plastic.

### **Seth Hackman, NJDEP Bureau Chief**

Seth Hackman serves as Chief of the Bureau of Solid Waste Planning and Licensing within the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. Seth has a bachelor's degree in Geography and a master's degree in business administration, both from Rutgers University. After spending 14 years within NJDEP's Bureau of Geographic Information Systems, Seth moved to his current Division as supervisor of the Solid Waste Utility Control Act Unit which oversees more than one thousand solid waste public utility companies operating in the New Jersey. Currently in his role as Bureau Chief, Seth oversees many of the recently passed legislations including the Dirty Dirt Law, Single-use Reduction Law, Food Waste Recycling and Food Waste-to-Energy Law, and Minimum Recycled Content Law. Seth's role also includes management of solid waste licensing, landfill escrow, and district solid waste management programs, and the issuance of grant funding to counties, municipalities, and institutions of higher education pursuant to New Jersey's Recycling Enhancement Act.

### **Brooke Helmick, Manager, Law and Policy Program, New Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance**

Brooke serves as the Law and Policy Program Manager for New Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance (NJEJA). In this role, she manages policy work at the local, state, and federal level by furthering legislation and government policies as well as educational and advocacy work that prioritizes justice and equity for New Jersey's low-income communities and communities of color. Prior to joining NJEJA, she has worked as the Chief Policy Fellow and Disability Rights Advocate for the Los Angeles Civil Rights Department, as well as served as a Research Assistant for Princeton University Bridging Divides Initiative and as a Community Engagement Graduate Intern for All In Together.

Brooke earned her B.A. from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) in Gender Studies with minors in Global Studies and Theatre. Her research at UCLA focused on the disproportionate impact of climate change and climate-related risk on women of color, particularly those in the Global South. She went on to earn her M.A. in Human Rights Studies from Columbia University Institute for the Study of Human Rights where she published her thesis highlighting the relationship between social wellness and rates of extremism to identify policy mechanisms for community safety, violence prevention, and democratic stability.

In her spare time, she enjoys reading, writing, and hiking as well as engaging in the arts as a method for healing, transformation, and social change.

### **Janine MacGregor, Director, NJDEP Division of Sustainable Waste Management**

Janine MacGregor was appointed NJDEP's Director of the Division of Sustainable Waste Management in January 2022. The Division is responsible for the regulation of solid and hazardous waste facilities and recycling facilities, as well as implementation of the many progressive laws put in place to promote a broad range of recycling activities throughout the State. In addition, the Division has been charged with reimagining sustainable materials management for the future, to meet the challenges and adopt best practices in the reduction, reuse, and recycling of these materials. Janine was formerly the Executive Director of the New Jersey Site Remediation Professional Licensing Board and worked for many years as a special project coordinator in the Office of the Assistant Commissioner for Site Remediation, coordinating the Passaic River Remediation and Litigation and several other transformational initiatives. Janine began her career at NJDEP in a field sampling group, then went on to various staff and leadership positions in the areas of planning, strategic development, and information systems support.

### **Mary Ellen Peppard, Vice President, New Jersey Food Council**

Mary Ellen Peppard serves as Vice President of the New Jersey Food Council (NJFC), a trade association representing food retailers, including supermarkets, independent grocers and convenience stores, and their supplier partners.

As chief government affairs representative, Ms. Peppard advocates on behalf of the Association for food industry legislation, proposed regulations and general business issues that impact the food retail and distribution industry. She formulates policy positions and implements legislative strategies on priority issues, which encompasses a wide variety of policy areas such as food safety, environmental, labor and tax issues. She works with statewide business associations and national food industry partners on priority legislative and regulatory issues. Ms. Peppard leads several NJFC policy committees, including the Government Affairs, Labor Issues, Environmental Affairs, and Tax Policy Committees. She serves on the New Jersey Plastics Advisory Council representing retailers.

Prior to joining NJFC, Ms. Peppard represented the business community as a government affairs representative at the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce, where her focus was on tax and healthcare issues.

Ms. Peppard earned her Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Muhlenberg College and her Master of Public Affairs and Politics from Rutgers University, Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy.

### **Steven Rinaldi, Research Scientist, NJDEP**

Steven Rinaldi is a Research Scientist in the NJDEP's Bureau of Sustainability and has worked to advance recycling in New Jersey for the past 37 years. Steven has worked on all aspects of recycling, including legislative implementation, rulemaking, market and program development,

grant management and education and promotion. Among other things, Steven coordinates the Department's New Jersey WasteWise Business Network, works closely with Sustainable Jersey on recycling issues and develops educational and promotional initiatives on behalf of recycling. Steven has a master's in city and Regional Planning Degree (with an Environmental Planning focus) from Rutgers University and a Bachelor of Arts Degree in History, also from Rutgers University.

### **Marilyn Schlossbach, Restaurateur, Beauty Disruptor, Humanitarian**

Marilyn Schlossbach's work ripples beyond the kitchen and into her community. She leverages her leadership, creativity, and values-driven ethic to advocate for social and environmental initiatives. A passionate surfer, traveler, and matriarch, she brings her coastal sensibility to everything she creates. As much a connoisseur as a curator, ocean-consciousness informs her conservationist efforts, passion for community care, and culinary excellence.

Her New Jersey presence is a conduit for environmental and social justice. Marilyn's community-driven work includes advocating for sustainable agriculture, accessible culinary and hospitality training, and dining destinations dedicated to the flourishing of underserved communities.

She is a self-taught chef and author with a passion for the seaside and a commitment to nourishing her community through an commitment to the environment and the culinary arts. Marilyn's focus is to explore all the gastronomic possibilities of local ingredients, combining classic culinary wisdom from around the world with of-the-moment techniques. With boldness and vision, she transcends the boundaries of the kitchen as an active citizen, valuing the small producer, encouraging young professionals, and supporting her various local not-for-profit ventures.

Marilyn's community work includes a collaboration with Interfaith Neighbors on Asbury Park's Kula Urban Farm, organizing community gardening and surf lessons with the Boys and Girls Club of Monmouth County, and unwavering support of environmental organizations like Clean Ocean Action, Surfrider Foundation, the American Littoral Society and Waves for Water that work to protect coastlines and marine environments. In addition, Marilyn is an executive board member of the New Jersey Restaurant and Hospitality Association, and she sits on the board of the College Achieve Greater Asbury Park Charter School.

Marilyn is the founder of the not-for-profit Food For Thought By The Sea. The organization's philanthropic endeavors are achieved through programs that foster healthy relationships and learning opportunities through culinary job placement and environmental studies. During COVID, Marilyn and her Food for Thought by the Sea network delivered 2,000+ meals weekly to local residents.

### **Gary Sondermeyer, Vice President, Operations, Bayshore Recycling**

Gary Sondermeyer is VP of Operations for Bayshore Recycling of Woodbridge, NJ. Bayshore is one of NJ's largest recyclers, managing 9 separate recycling operations on its 58-

acre campus. Gary also serves as Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Sustainable Jersey Program, Vice Chair of the Governor appointed State Plastics Advisory Council and Co-Chair of the Legislative Committee of the Association of New Jersey Recyclers. Gary joined Bayshore following 30 years of service at the NJ Department of Environmental Protection. He served as the agency's Chief of Staff for 10 years under 6 New Jersey Governors. Gary has undergraduate and Master's Degrees in Environmental Planning from Rutgers University.

### **John Weber, Town Council of Bradley Beach**

John Weber is a lifelong NJ resident who had lived in coastal Monmouth County for over 30 years. John has volunteered and worked for coastal and ocean environmental groups for over 25 years thereby gaining a deep understanding of the plastics problem along our shorelines. He is on the Town Council of Bradley Beach serving in his third term. It is in his capacity as an elected official that Governor Murphy appointed John on the Plastics Advisory Council in 2021.

### **Allen A. Weston, Legislative Director, New Jersey Association of Counties**

Allen Weston serves as the Legislative Director for the New Jersey Association of Counties (NJAC), representing all 21 county governing bodies in advocating for legislation, regulations, and policy directives that empower county governments to operate more effectively and efficiently. With almost a decade serving in this role, Allen is county government's chief advocate on environmental, public health, labor, procurement, and social benefit reform issues. In addition to advocacy, Allen acts as the county representative on several working groups and coalitions comprised of representation spanning both the public and private sectors. Prior to joining NJAC, Allen worked at the New Jersey Food Council, representing New Jersey's supermarkets and convenience stores on food distribution issues. A native of West Windsor, Mercer County, Allen is a graduate of Pennsylvania State University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Economics.