



THE NATIONAL FORUM FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AND TOXIC TORT ISSUES

32nd Annual Conference

Union League Club
Chicago, IL

September 23 – September 25, 2026

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AGENDA

Wednesday, September 23, 2026

5:00 – 7:00 pm Networking Reception

Thursday, September 24, 2026

7:00 – 8:00 am Continental Breakfast

7:50 – 8:00 am	Opening Remarks	Ryan Gillespie <i>Chubb Environmental Chicago, IL</i> Suzanne Karapashev <i>Westfield Insurance Westfield Center, OH</i>
8:00 – 9:00 am	Legislative Update – Asbestos Litigation Reform and Sound Science in Regulations • Recent studies documenting over-naming in asbestos cases • Recently enacted reforms to address over-naming • Asbestos trust transparency efforts • Ways defense counsel can use these tools • Recent state regulatory reform laws	Mark Behrens <i>Shook, Hardy & Bacon, LLP Washington, D.C.</i> Mary Margaret Gay <i>Gay Jones & Kuhn PLLC Jackson, MS</i> John Kotte <i>Nationwide Indemnity Wheaton, IL</i>
9:00 – 9:45 am	Climate Change Litigation at a Crossroads: Supreme Court Review and Emerging Liability Frameworks • The upcoming U.S. Supreme Court oral argument in <i>Suncor Energy, Inc. v. County Commissioners of Boulder County</i> • Various forms of climate litigation, including public nuisance, trespass, unjust enrichment, and consumer protection theories • State statutes authorizing Superfund-type liability • Chapter on climate science in the recent Federal Judiciary's Science Manual	Phil Goldberg <i>Shook Hardy & Bacon, LLP Washington, DC</i> Erica Klenicki <i>National Association of Manufacturers Washington, DC</i> Michael Williams <i>State of West Virginia Charleston, WV</i>
9:45 – 10:00 am	Break	

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Thursday, September 24, 2026 (Continued)

10:00 – 10:45 am	Eating Risk: Ultra-Processed Foods and Mass Tort Exposure • Definitions of UPFs, including government definitions, the NOVA classification system, and definitions advanced in litigation • The science regarding UPFs and alleged health impacts • Existing lawsuits and emerging litigation theories • Similarities between UPF litigation and prior mass torts • Current uncertainties and considerations for food manufacturers, insurers, and claims professionals	Elizabeth Sorenson Brotten <i>Foley Mansfield</i> <i>Minneapolis, MN</i> Shelley Napolitano <i>Foley Mansfield</i> <i>New Orleans, LA</i>
10:45 – 11:30 am	Beyond the TAP: Emerging PFAS Exposure Pathways Testing and Risks • Emerging PFAS exposure pathways beyond drinking water • Advances in PFAS testing and analytical methods • Regulatory and public health developments • Litigation trends and considerations • Insurance coverage and emerging liability trends	Frank Pagone <i>RHP Risk Management Inc.</i> <i>Chicago, IL</i> Brian Gross <i>MG+M The Law Firm</i> <i>Boston, MA</i> Robyn Gutheil <i>Swiss Re America Holding Corporation</i> <i>Oxford, CT</i> Jay West <i>American Chemistry Council</i> <i>Washington DC</i>
11:30 – 12:15 pm	Releases to Publicly Owned Treatment Works, PFAS, Petroleum and Industrial Waste • Regulatory compliance and how POTWs act as the regulatory control point for industrial sewer discharges • Preventing operational interference, stopping pollutant pass-through, and promoting sludge recovery • Civil/criminal liability for NPDES permit exceedances and mounting litigation over PFAS in biosolids • The wastewater path from private laterals through public mains to primary, secondary, and solids handling	Christopher DeCarlo <i>The Vertex Companies, Inc.</i> <i>Branchburg, NJ</i> Brianna Schroeder <i>Janzen Schroeder Ag Law</i> <i>Indianapolis, IN</i>
12:15 – 1:15 pm	Lunch	

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1:15 – 1:45 pm

Using Environmental Due Diligence to Inform Insurance Underwriting and Claims Analysis

- How environmental due diligence can inform insurance underwriting and claims analysis
- Going beyond a cursory review of a standard Phase I Environmental Site Assessment to evaluate risks
- Integrating thorough environmental assessment with insurance and legal review to anticipate liabilities, protect property owners and occupants, and manage pollution risks

Michelle Lawson
*Chubb Environmental
Philadelphia, PA*

Seth Kagan
*Sompo North America
Purchase, NY*

Craig Gocker
*Antea Group
Bloomington, IN*

Kevin McCarthy
*Antea Group
Portland, OR*

1:45 – 2:30 pm

Environmental Considerations for Navigating the ABC's of Modern Technology

- The natural resource, water, and energy demands behind AI, EVs, chips, cryptocurrency, and data centers.
- Mining and processing lithium, cobalt, and copper and the associated water, waste, and contamination concerns
- Growing electricity and water demands from chips, cryptocurrency, AI, and data centers
- Increasing electronic waste, limited recycling, and potential environmental impacts
- New regulatory, insurance, litigation, and sustainability risks associated with rapidly evolving technologies

Sara Mangelsdorf
*Goldberg Segalla LLP
St. Louis, MO*

Lauren Behan
*Goldberg Segalla LLP
St. Louis, MO*

Christopher S. Abel
*Vertex
Indianapolis, IN*

2:30 – 3:00 pm

Before We Set Sail: Regulatory Updates You Can't Afford to Miss

- Federal and state-by-state review of 2026 environmental regulatory developments
- Developments categorized across PFAS, pesticides and emerging contaminants, data centers, SMRs, carbon capture/storage, and other regulatory trends
- Assessment of how those developments may affect environmental claims, liability, allocation, coverage, and reserve

James Hogan
*The Elam Group
Noblesville, IN*

Amy Fitzpatrick
*Co/Action Specialty
Insurance Group
Morristown, NJ*

Boarding between
3:30 – 4:00 pm
Depart at 4:00 pm
Returns at 6:00 pm

FETTI – ODYSSEY RIVER CRUISE RECEPTION

(Business Casual Attire)

Buses will transport
attendees to the dock
at 3:15 pm

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7:00 – 8:00 am

Continental Breakfast

8:00 – 9:00 am

All Things Coverage: (1) Coverage Update For 2026, A National Overview; (2) Recent Developments in Silica-Related Litigation, and (3) Contribution Claims Between Insurers in “All Sums” States

- A coverage update for 2026 and key cases impacting environmental and emerging risks
- The resurgence of silica-related bodily injury claims from exposure to fabricated stone, key policy provisions, and recent cases and rulings
- “All sums,” the selected “all sums” carriers, and rights of contribution against non-participating insurers

Patricia Santelle
White & Williams LLP
Philadelphia, PA

Linda Bondi Morrison
Tressler LLP
Irvine, CA

Peter Mintzer
Selman Leichenger Edson
Seattle, WA

9:00 – 10:00 am

Smart Tools, Smarter Ethics: Meeting Your Ethical Duties in the Age of AI

- How generative AI is being used by legal professionals, insurance adjusters, and consultants
- How uses of generative AI intersect with ethical duties, claims-handling obligations, and regulatory expectations
- Professional responsibility, insurer bad faith risk, automation bias, AI governance, and explainability, confidentiality, billing, and expert reliability
- How AI can replace efficiency without replacing accountable professional judgment

Thomas Hanekamp
Cruser Mitchell
Chicago, IL

Kieran Purcell
Rimkus
Austin, TX

Melissa Anderson
Old Republic
Chicago, IL

10:00 – 10:30 am

Silent but Costly: Vapor Intrusion Updates You Need to Know

- Current vapor intrusion regulations, litigation trends, and the effects of recent regulatory developments
- The financial impact of regulatory changes on investigation, remediation, and mitigation efforts
- Insurance coverage challenges and considerations related to vapor intrusion exposures

Yvette Nadgir
Westfield Specialty Ins. Co.
Berkeley Heights, NJ

Bjorn Wespestad
Roux
Oakland, CA

Frederick Brown
Weber Gallagher
Philadelphia, PA

10:30 – 10:45 am

Break

10:45 – 11:15 am

PFAS Coverage Continued

- Bodily injury and property damage liability exposure for PFAS claims
- Current and potential future claims from PFAS
- Unique insurance coverage issues emerging from PFAS claims

Charles W. Browning
Plunkett Cooney, PC
Bloomfield Hills, MI

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11:15 – 12:00 pm

Opening Pandora's Box- Microplastics, Emerging Contaminants and Old Favorites (And, Their New Tricks)

- PFAS, the impact of PFAS on environment and industry, and legal and regulatory PFAS requirements
- Current microplastic legislation and associated analytical realities
- Overview of 6PPD/6PPD-quinone, tire and road wear particles, and environmental impacts

Howard Goldberg
*MG+M The Law Firm
Boston, MA*

Mary Gade
*Gade Environmental
Group
Chicago, IL*

Andrew Patterson
*Eurofins Specialty
Services
El Dorado Hills, CA*

Timothy R. Barber, PhD
*Environmental Resources
Management
Cleveland, OH*

12:00 – 12:45 pm

Renewable Energy: Generating Litigation, Environmental Risks, & Insurance Challenges

- Adverse impacts of renewable energy systems on the environment
- How impacts can result in insurance claims and the complicated nature of resulting insurance claims
- Legal implications of the environmental impacts of renewable energy systems

Russ Greatorex
*HETI
Atlanta, GA*

Bonnie Stevenson
*Allianz
St. Louis, MO*

Larry Mason
*Goldberg Segalla
Chicago, IL*

Robin Kelliher
*USI Insurance Services
Short Hills, NJ*

1:00 – 1:15 pm

Business Meeting

This is a Business Casual Event.

The Union League Club is an elegant experience. All club members and their guests are asked to dress appropriately: Business Casual includes collared shirt, including turtleneck, slacks or skirt with blouse or sweater. Dress denim is not considered Business Casual. Thank you.

THANK YOU FOR JOINING US!