

Dr. Elizabeth Southerland (USEPA—retired)

Dr. Southerland retired from USEPA in 2017 as Director of the Office of Science and Technology in the Office of Water following a 40-year career as an environmental engineer/scientist for Federal, State and local environmental protection agencies, including 33 years at USEPA.

At USEPA, she led or made major contributions to regulatory programs for water quality management, drinking water protection, and hazardous waste site clean-up. She led the development of national guidance manuals and regulations, coordination and negotiations with state environment agencies, outreach to industry stakeholders, and testimony before Congressional committees. Included among her accomplishments are the development of the first-ever limits on toxic wastewater discharges from coal-fired power plants; national fish consumption advisories for certain fish species contaminated with mercury; a three-tiered risk assessment approach for setting hazardous waste clean-up standards; and national water quality criteria to protect swimmers from disease-causing microorganisms. In 2015, Dr. Southerland received the Distinguished Presidential Rank Award for her career at USEPA.

Prior to joining USEPA, Dr. Southerland led stormwater pollution control programs for the Virginia State Water Control Board, and she managed the development of the first water quality model of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed (covered 6 states and 64,000 sq mi) while completing her PhD research at a regional planning agency.

She received her PhD in civil & environmental engineering from Virginia Tech which inducted her into the Academy of Distinguished Alumni in 2013.