

Director, Office of Science

Asmeret Asefaw Berhe

Dr. Asmeret Asefaw Berhe is Director of the Office of Science at the U.S. Department of Energy. She is on leave from the University of California, Merced where she is a Professor of Soil Biogeochemistry, holds the Ted and Jan Falasco Chair in Earth Sciences and Geology, and serves as the Interim Associate Dean for Graduate Education. Berhe's internationally recognized research lies at the intersection of soil science, global change science, and political ecology, with an emphasis on how the soil system regulates the earth's climate and the dynamic two-way relationship between the natural environment and human societies. Berhe's expertise on feedbacks in the earth system brings a unique perspective for integrating across the physical and natural sciences.



Berhe's scientific leadership has been recognized by multiple national awards. She is a Fellow of both the American Geophysical Union (AGU) and the Geological Society of America (GSA) and has received numerous awards and honors including the Joanne Simpson Medal from AGU (2020), Bromery Award from GSA (2019), and was selected as a New Voice in Science from the U.S. National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine (2018).

Berhe previously served as the Chair of the US National Committee on Soil Science at the National Academies and chaired the U.S. delegation to the International Union of Soil Sciences' General Assembly at the World Congress of Soil Sciences. Berhe equally has demonstrated leadership in broadening participation in science, as a former Leadership board member for the Earth Science Women's Network and as a founding investigator of the ADVANCEGeo Partnership – a National Science Foundation funded effort to empower (geo)scientists to transform workplace climate through interventions to reduce harassment, discrimination, bullying, and other exclusionary behaviors in research environments.

Berhe was born and raised in Asmara, Eritrea and currently lives in Merced with her husband and two children. She received a B.Sc. in Soil and Water Conservation from the University of Asmara, an M.Sc. in Political Ecology from Michigan State University, and a Ph.D. in Biogeochemistry from the University of California, Berkeley.