

EPA honors outgoing NERC executive director

After four decades dedicated to resource conservation, **Lynn Rubinstein** will retire this year, leaving behind a legacy of work that will have a lasting impact.

For more than 20 years, she has served as executive director of the Northeast Recycling Council (NERC), a nonprofit focused on promoting waste reduction, recycling and composting. The organization also promotes environmentally preferable purchasing and decreasing the toxicity of solid waste, according to a news release from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which presented her with a Lifetime Achievement award at the EPA's virtual Environmental Merit Awards ceremony Oct. 12.

The Brattleboro, Vermont-based organization has received many awards as Rubinstein has expanded its reach by attracting more players and establishing more than 100 projects. These projects have aimed to recycle electronics, manage unwanted medication, document the relationship of jobs to recycling and inspire initiatives for recycling newsprint.

Rubinstein has been a trusted voice for the private recycling industry and government, fostering an environment where industry and government can discuss common issues and find solutions. She co-founded many programs, including the State Electronics Challenge, Electronics Recycling Coordination Clearinghouse and Government Recycling Demand Champions. Her related presentations, reports and articles are available on the [NERC's website](#).

An example of her commitment to keeping the council dynamic in a changing economy and waste stream was when she formed a partnership in 2017 between the council and the Northeast Waste Management Officials' Association, the EPA notes.

While Rubinstein is known for her leadership of the NERC, she also served as solid waste manager for Northampton, Massachusetts; conservation director for Holyoke, Massachusetts; mercury and electronics recycling program director at the University of Massachusetts; professor of land use management at Antioch New England in Keene, New Hampshire; and a resource planner and attorney at the U.S. Department of Justice.

Throughout her career, she has pioneered innovative programs, forged connections and raised the level of regional cooperation across the Northeast. Rubinstein's work has had a substantial impact that will last well into the future, the EPA says.