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People BEHIND THE WATER

Jay Rutherford, State Health Regulator, Burlington, Vermont

For the last 12 years, Jay Rutherford has worked as a State Health Regulator for the citizens of Vermont, but he has been helping others receive safe drinking water for four decades.

Rutherford's public health service began many years ago on the other side of the world.

In 1963, when he was a recent civil engineering graduate, Rutherford was working in Thailand as a Peace Corps volunteer to create small water treatment systems for towns and villages in need. Today, he works with State Health Regulators from across the country and national agencies such as the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) on water issues critical to Vermont and the nation.

Rutherford has also testified before Congress on behalf of the country's State Health Regulators to make certain that elected officials are aware of the resources needed at the state level to implement programs that keep the nation's drinking water safe and pure.

"One of my responsibilities is to work closely with our legislature to break down the complicated nuances of water regulations and also explain the value that they provide the public," he says.

But despite the amount of time he spends with state and national officials, the most rewarding part of his job is the effect that it ultimately has for the consuming public. "To do this job, one needs to be sensitive to the needs and cares of all water consumers," he says. "Trying to provide the best public health for the citizens of Vermont in the most efficient, cost-effective way possible is both challenging and very rewarding."



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