

July 15, 2026

NAEM Awards Committee
Lifetime Achievement Award

Re: Nomination of Stephanie Sparkman, P.E., for the NAEM Lifetime Achievement Award

Dear Members of the Awards Committee,

It is a genuine privilege to recommend Stephanie Sparkman for NAEM's Lifetime Achievement Award. I worked on Stephanie's team at Amazon, where she led me during her tenure as Global Environmental Governance and Systems Senior Leader. Reporting to her gave me a close, sustained view of how she operates as a leader, and it is on that basis that I can say plainly: Stephanie is the most capable environmental compliance leaders I have worked for, and the case for this award is not a close one.

What struck me first was the combination that defines her, deep technical rigor paired with a rare ability to lead people through relentless change. As a chemical engineer and licensed P.E., Stephanie understood compliance at the level of the regulation and the reporting mechanics, not just the summary slide. She could sit with an engineer and interrogate the details of a Tier II submission, then turn around and explain to leadership why those details mattered to the business. That credibility was earned, and it was the foundation of everything her teams accomplished.

I was on her team during a period when Amazon's environmental footprint was expanding faster than anyone's playbook could keep up with. Stephanie's answer was to build systems rather than heroics. She helped architect the governance frameworks and field-support functions that scaled Amazon's environmental compliance program from well under 100 locations to more than 1,500 across a global footprint, an expansion few EHS professionals in any industry have managed without compromise. I watched her insist, repeatedly, on the same discipline: simplify the process, standardize it, then systematize it with data so the frontline could execute. The Tier II automation work her team drove is the clearest example, replacing manual, spreadsheet-driven reporting with a data-driven approach that returned thousands of hours a year to proactive risk work instead of administrative entry, and that held up during Amazon's peak season when the business could least afford a compliance failure.

But the reason I would work for her again has as much to do with how she led as what she built. Stephanie treated governance not as a mechanism for control but as a way to take burden off the people in the field. Her orientation was consistently to remove obstacles for practitioners so they could focus on the work that actually reduced risk. She was calm under pressure in an environment that generated a great deal of it, direct without being harsh, and genuinely invested in developing the people around her. As a member of her team, I benefited from a leader who made expectations clear, trusted us to meet them, and built the structures that let us succeed rather than leaving us to improvise. She made me better at my own work, and I know I am not the only one on her team who would say so.

Stephanie's influence at Amazon never stopped at the edge of her own organization. She was generous with what she knew, coaching field environmental managers across the network and sharing the systems thinking behind her governance work so that teams far beyond her direct reports could apply it. She was also deliberate about elevating the standing of environmental compliance inside the business, translating site-level data into the kind of metrics that leadership could act on and making the case that environmental risk deserved a real seat at the table. That combination, building durable programs while developing the people and the profession around her, is what set her apart.

I can speak only to the years I worked alongside her, but those years were more than enough to convince me. Stephanie proved at Amazon that environmental compliance can scale as fast as the business it protects and make that business stronger for it. She did it with technical excellence, with generosity toward the people around her, and with the kind of leadership that people remember and try to emulate. I am one of many who learned from her, and I am better at my own work because of it.

Best,

Claudia Salomon

Formerly, Global EMIS Program Manager, Amazon