

Randy Williams

As someone who started in the field as a laborer and now serves as a Director, I've seen firsthand how hard Operators (Line Crews) work and how little they're often paid in return. The responsibilities keep growing — more certifications, more regulatory demands (including the frankly excessive fingerprinting requirement), and more pressure — yet the compensation rarely reflects the value these professionals bring.

While I support ongoing education, it's hard to justify piling on more requirements when the pay doesn't even compete with entry-level retail jobs. Some of my team members could earn as much at Walmart, without the stress or responsibility of safeguarding public health.

If we want to retain skilled Operators and attract new talent, we need to start with fair pay. One idea worth exploring is a statewide minimum wage tied to certification levels. It wouldn't be easy, and there would be challenges, but it's a conversation worth having.

You might also consider integrating ethics training into existing manuals and programs — not as an additional burden, but as a small, embedded component. It's important, but it shouldn't add to the already onerous list of requirements that make it nearly impossible to attract and retain workers at the wages most cities offer.

I truly appreciate what rulemakers are trying to do, but there needs to be a healthy dose of reality baked into these ideas.

Operators are essential. It's time we treat them that way — with respect, support, and compensation that matches their commitment.