

# GENERAL SESSION SPEAKERS

## AMBASSADOR KEVIN MARINO CABRERA

### UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF PANAMA



Kevin Marino Cabrera was nominated by President Donald J. Trump and confirmed by the United States Senate on April 9, 2025, to serve as the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Panama. Ambassador Cabrera is committed to strengthening the relationship between the United States and Panama—promoting regional security, expanding U.S. trade and investment, and deepening cooperation on issues that are vital to our nation’s prosperity and global competitiveness.

As Ambassador, Cabrera is focused on ensuring that the U.S.–Panama relationship reflects the core pillars of American foreign policy under President Trump’s leadership: security, sovereignty, economic growth, and the advancement of freedom while defending American interests.

Ambassador Cabrera brings to his role a distinguished background in public service and leadership in international trade, economic development, and regional cooperation. Prior to his appointment, Ambassador Cabrera served as a Miami-Dade County Commissioner, where he chaired the committee overseeing Miami International Airport and served as Vice Chair of the Miami-Dade International Trade Consortium. In these roles, he led trade delegations to strategic global partners—including France, South Africa, Japan, the Dominican Republic, the United Kingdom, and Ireland— helping to deepen commercial ties, attract investment, and expand U.S. economic engagement abroad.

He also convened the 26th InterAmerican Conference of Mayors and Local Authorities, engaging leaders from over two dozen cities across Latin America and the Caribbean. The forum addressed shared priorities in infrastructure, governance, and regional development.

During his tenure in public office, Ambassador Cabrera championed the modernization of key infrastructure, promoted innovation in public service delivery, and expanded economic opportunity through streamlined governance and strategic investment initiatives.

Earlier in his career, Ambassador Cabrera served in senior political and organizational roles, including as Florida State Director for the Republican National Committee and President Donald J. Trump’s 2020 re-election campaign in Florida, contributing to a commanding electoral victory in one of the nation’s most politically consequential states.

Born in Miami, Florida, to Cuban exile parents, Ambassador Cabrera’s life has been shaped by a deep belief in freedom, self-determination, and the promise of the American Dream. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science, cum laude, from Florida International University and graduated with honors from Miami Dade College.

He approaches his mission with a clear purpose: to promote a safer, stronger, and more prosperous United States across the Americas.

# GENERAL SESSION SPEAKERS

## REECE H. CANNADY

### REGIONAL DIRECTOR FOR SOUTH ASIA



Reece H. Cannady serves as the regional director for South Asia for the U.S. Grains & BioProducts Council, a non-profit organization that promotes the use of U.S. barley, corn, sorghum and related products worldwide.

In this capacity, he is responsible for evaluating, planning, coordinating, implementing and managing the Council's market development programs in India and the South Asia region.

Cannady previously served as the assistant director for Europe and the Middle East at the Council, in which he directed regional market development activity throughout the region. Prior to that, he acted as manager of global trade for the Council from 2018 to 2022, spending time in both the Washington, D.C., headquarters and the Tunis regional office, interacting with various global markets for U.S. coarse grains and co-products. Before his work at the Council, Cannady spent time in Amarillo, TX, working for Attebury Grain, LLC as a grain trader, selling corn, sorghum and wheat to domestic and foreign animal feeders and millers.

He graduated with a bachelor of science degree in economics with a dual concentration in finance and management from the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business.

## JAMES GLUECK

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



As Plant Based Products Council's Executive Director, James Glueck leads the organization's advocacy for a shift toward a more circular bioeconomy through greater adoption of renewable, plant-based materials. He works to educate stakeholders on programs and policies that will support the growth of the plant-based products industry, helping to harness its environmental and economic potential to deliver a more sustainable future.

Prior to joining PBPC, James served as Vice President at the Torrey Advisory Group, where he advised and represented clients across the food and agriculture value chain on engaging federal legislative and executive branch officials and stakeholders on policy issues including sustainability, supply chain, health and hunger, research, regulation, and production agriculture.

Previously, James held many positions with the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry, including Staff Director and Policy Director where he led teams responsible for oversight, presidential nominations, and bipartisan, bicameral legislative efforts including reauthorization of the 2014 and 2018 Farm Bills and COVID-19 emergency relief packages.

James has also worked for Senator Mike Johanns, Bunge North America, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. An alumnus of Texas A&M University, Glueck holds a bachelor's degree in agricultural development with a minor in business and a certificate in Spanish.

# GENERAL SESSION SPEAKERS

## **TOMMY HAMAMOTO**

---

### **DIRECTOR FOR JAPAN**



Tetsuo "Tommy" Hamamoto serves as the director in Japan for the U.S. Grains & BioProducts Council, a non-profit organization that promotes the global use of U.S. barley, corn, sorghum and related products including ethanol and distiller's dried grains with solubles (DDGS). In this capacity, he identifies and addresses all relevant trade, technical and policy-related factors relevant to building and maintaining the market for U.S. grains and co-products in Japan.

Before joining the Council in 2008, Hamamoto worked for Monsanto Company, serving as public affairs lead of Japan since 2006. He was responsible for public affairs activities related to agricultural biotechnology and its' products.

From 1997 to 2006, Hamamoto served as an agricultural specialist at the U.S. embassy in Tokyo where he was in charge of coordinating rules and regulations between the United States and Japan on food safety and standards, including chemical residues and biotechnology. Prior to that, he was a microbiology research scientist at the Institute of Physical and Chemical Research (RIKEN) for 11 years, working on industry application for genetic engineering using bacteria.

Hamamoto received his bachelor's degree from the University of Tokyo in agricultural chemistry, and a Ph.D. from the Graduate School, University of Tokyo in microbiology.

## **HAKSOO KIM**

---

### **DIRECTOR FOR SOUTH KOREA**



Haksoo Kim serves as the country director of South Korea for the U.S. Grains & BioProducts Council, a non-profit organization that promotes the global use of U.S. corn, barley, sorghum and related products including ethanol and distiller's dried grains with solubles (DDGS). In this capacity, Haksoo manages the Grains & BioProducts Council Seoul Office, develops strategies and plans to increase U.S. market share.

Prior to the Council, Haksoo served as a director general for Korea Agro-Fisheries & Food Trade Corporation (aT) where he managed agricultural trading division, and the president of aT Grain Company where he managed a grain trading venture in Chicago. Haksoo has mainly engaged in the international grain business and agricultural trade in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles and Korea for last 33 years.

Haksoo studied international trade and industry at the Graduate School of Economics, Yonsei University.

# GENERAL SESSION SPEAKERS

## ERIN HEITKAMP

---

### VICE PRESIDENT OF SAF AND CARBON SOLUTIONS



Erin Heitkamp serves as VP of SAF and Carbon Solutions for Gevo. In her position at Gevo, she develops sustainable aviation fuel (SAF)-based carbon solutions for SAF and SAF attribute aggregators, business aviation, OEMs, and commercial cargo and passenger carriers around the world. Ms. Heitkamp has over two decades of experience in the overlapping spaces of sustainability, policy, strategy, supply chain and business development across the aviation, fuel and food and agriculture sectors.

## ALICIA KOCH

---

### DIRECTOR OF GLOBAL ETHANOL EXPORT DEVELOPMENT



Alicia Koch serves as the director of global ethanol export development for the U.S. Grains & BioProducts Council, a non-profit organization that operates globally to promote the use of U.S. barley, corn, sorghum and related products including ethanol. In this capacity, Koch oversees development and execution of the Council's global ethanol program including strategy development, program implementation, public affairs, and strategic partnerships.

Koch previously served as executive director at Pivot Clean Energy Co, a nonprofit biofuels industry coalition and spent nine years across a variety of roles at POET, the world's largest biofuels producer.

She holds a bachelor's degree in biology from Taylor University.

# GENERAL SESSION SPEAKERS

## MICHAEL LU

### DIRECTOR FOR TAIWAN



Michael Lu serves as the director in Taiwan for the U.S. Grains & BioProducts Council, a non-profit organization that promotes the global use of U.S. barley, corn, sorghum and related products including ethanol and distiller's dried grains with solubles (DDGS).

In this capacity, he identifies and addresses all relevant trade, technical and policy-related factors relevant to building and maintaining the market for U.S. grains and co-products in Taiwan.

Lu joined the Council in 2018 with 30 years of experience working in agri-food industries, trading, sales and marketing. Prior to joining the Council, Lu worked for Cargill in Taiwan as the assistant general manager in charge of the grains, oilseeds, oils and non-grain feed ingredients business, working with products originated from around the world.

Lu has strong relationships and connections with government agencies and grain end-users in Taiwan, including animal feed producers, poultry and hog producers, crushing plants and oil refiners, flour milling and corn milling plants and local traders supplying agri-food ingredients for local markets. He has been invited to participate in the government food security conference, as well as to give public speeches to relevant industrial associations, university food and agricultural relations institutes, public listed ag-food companies and international agricultural and grain trade forums.

He earned a bachelor's degree in animal sciences from National Chung Hsing University in Taiwan.

## RYAN LEGRAND

### PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Ryan LeGrand serves as the President and Chief Executive Officer for the U.S. Grains & BioProducts Council.

LeGrand brings decades of experience in export grain trading and market development. Fluent in Spanish, LeGrand spent much of his career in Mexico. Before joining the Council he began his career as an export trader at Garvey International before going on to lead multinational teams at Hawkeye Gold and Gavilon.

LeGrand also serves as Vice Chair of the Agricultural Policy Advisory Committee, a joint committee of the United States Trade Representative and the U.S. Department of Agriculture and is a member of the Advisory Committee for Trade Policy Negotiations, a presidentially appointed advisory committee to the United States Trade Representative.

# GENERAL SESSION SPEAKERS

## DR. RICAURTE VÁSQUEZ MORALES

### ADMINISTRATOR OF THE PANAMA CANAL AUTHORITY



Ricaurte Vásquez Morales was appointed Administrator of the Panama Canal Authority for a seven-year period starting September 2019.

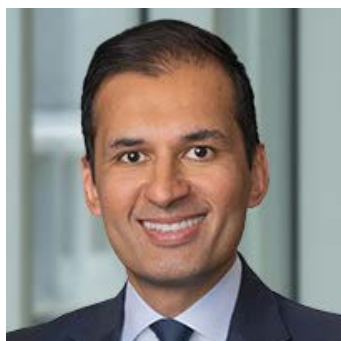
Dr. Vásquez is a Panamanian economist with an extensive and successful professional career of 50 years in the government sector and in private companies in financial, economic and administrative management.

Within the public administration he has held prominent positions such as: Minister of Finance and Treasury, Minister of Planning and Economic Policy as well as of Economy and Finance in 2004. He was the first non-US Chief Financial Officer for the Panama Canal and later Deputy Administrator and President of the Board of Directors. In the private sector, his experience covers banking at Chase Manhattan Bank, mining development with Rio Tinto Zinc in the development of the Cerro Colorado copper project. More recently at General Electric with regional responsibilities and covering Gas-to-Power initiatives in Latin America, retiring in 2015 to carry out his professional practice with SIGMA Management Advisors Corp.

Ricaurte Vásquez holds a Ph. D. and M.S. from Rensselaer Polytechnic, a M.E. from North Carolina State University and a B.S. from Villanova University. He has been a professor of Economics and Finance in Panama and abroad. His professional experience is complemented as a university professor of Economics at Florida State University, at its headquarters in Panama.

## SHAILESH SAHAY

### PARTNER, BRACEWELL



Shailesh Sahay is a leader on energy transition, climate, and environmental issues, with extensive experience in the liquid fuels, climate technology, energy, manufacturing, carbon capture, and agricultural sectors. Shai's scientific background and technical acumen allow him to delve into complex issues and serve as an interface between how industry works and the policies that affect businesses.

Shai maintains a robust environmental counseling practice and has engaged in compliance advising, enforcement defense, and regulatory advocacy relating to the Clean Air Act, the Toxic Substances Control Act, the Clean Water Act, the Safe Drinking Water Act, green marketing, and environmental, social, and governance issues, among other topics.

Shai also works closely with transactional and tax attorneys on matters where environmental attributes are central to the value proposition of a deal. These types of agreements involve regulatory programs such as the California Low Carbon Fuel Standard and federal Renewable Fuel Standard, voluntary carbon offsets, and Inflation Reduction Act tax credits such as 45Q, 45V, and 45Z.

Shai previously served for over six years as in-house counsel to the largest renewable fuels producer in the world and as acting general counsel of the largest renewable fuels trade association.

# GENERAL SESSION SPEAKERS

## MANUEL SANCHEZ

### DIRECTOR FOR THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA



Manuel Sanchez serves as the director the People's Republic of China for the U.S. Grains & BioProducts Council, a non-profit organization that promotes the global use of U.S. barley, corn, sorghum, and related products, including ethanol and distiller's dried grains with solubles (DDGS).

In this capacity, Sanchez identifies and addresses all relevant trade, technical and policy-related factors relevant to building and maintaining the U.S. grain and co-product market in the People's Republic of China.

Before his current function, Sanchez held various positions for the Council in the Southeast Asia regional office and headquarters in Washington, D.C. His most recent position was regional director for Southeast Asia. Before that, Sanchez served as

Southeast Asia's deputy director, assisting with the overall coordination and management of Council programs in the region.

Sanchez also served as the manager of global trade for the Council. In this capacity, Sanchez supported the Council's worldwide trade servicing sector, monitoring and tracking trade issues in expanding markets and the overall management of Council programs involving U.S. corn and barley.

Prior to joining the Council, Sanchez worked at Cargill Incorporated from 2007-2014, serving in various roles, including grain marketing advisor in Valparaiso, IN, and trade execution supervisor in Coral Gables, FL. Sanchez brings an extensive set of experience and skills in the arena of international trade of grains and oilseeds.

## MARRI TEJADA

### REGIONAL DIRECTOR FOR LATIN AMERICA



Marri Tejada holds the position of Regional Director for Latin America at the U.S. Grains & BioProducts Council. In her role, Tejada oversees all Council operations in Latin America, covering Central and South America as well as the Caribbean.

Prior to assuming this regional leadership role, Tejada contributed significantly to the Council's initiatives from 2008 to 2014, holding various positions at the organization's headquarters in Washington, DC, including serving as the director of communications. Before her tenure with the Council, Tejada gained valuable experience with the Minnesota Corn Growers Association.

Having roots in agriculture, Tejada's journey began as the daughter of a seventh-generation corn, soy, and swine farmer in Southwest Minnesota. Beyond her professional responsibilities, she is an avid practitioner of Hapkido, finds joy in swimming and exercising, and enjoys leisure time playing dominos. She shares her adventures exploring Panama with her husband and two young children.

# GENERAL SESSION SPEAKERS

## MARK WILSON

---

### CHAIRMAN



Mark Wilson serves as chairman of the U.S. Grains & BioProducts Council, a non-profit organization that promotes the global use of U.S. barley, corn, sorghum and related products including ethanol and distiller's dried grains with solubles (DDGS). In this capacity, Wilson serves as member of the organization's 15-person board of directors.

Wilson has a farm located in Toulon, Illinois, where he grows corn and soybeans and has farmed full-time on the farm since 1988. He received a Bachelor of Science degree from Iowa State University.

Wilson has been a Council delegate for 11 years and is a member of the Illinois Corn Marketing Board. He previously served as the corn sector director, Innovation & Sustainability A-Team lead, Asia A-Team lead, Farm Progress Show manager and chairman of the Illinois Corn Marketing Board.

The U.S. Grains & BioProducts Council develops export markets for U.S. barley, corn, sorghum and related products including distiller's dried grains with solubles (DDGS) and ethanol. With full-time presence in 30 locations, the Council operates programs in more than 70 countries and the European Union. The Council believes exports are vital to global economic development and to U.S. agriculture's profitability. Detailed information about the Council and its programs is online at [www.grains.org](http://www.grains.org).