



Rachel Saltzman

Partner, Washington DC

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Rachel Saltzman, Partner—Administrative Law/Environment

Rachel focuses her practice on environmental law and sustainability. She is respected for her experience with ESG strategy development, environmental and product compliance counseling, and environmental enforcement defense and corporate remediation.

Rachel offers over a decade of experience in private practice, government service, and as in-house counsel at a top 20 Fortune Global 500 company. During her time in-house, she provided both legal support and executive leadership across a full range of business strategy and operations, leading environmental, social, and governance (ESG) strategy development and environmental, health, and safety compliance (EHS) efforts. She is well positioned to advise clients across industries on sustainability, product stewardship, and environmental matters.

Prior to entering private practice, Rachel served as an attorney-advisor in the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Region 9 (Pacific Southwest) office in San Francisco. She led hazardous waste enforcement cases and supervised the legal aspects of Superfund cleanups. Notably, she served as the EPA's lead negotiator in consent decree negotiations concerning the cleanup of abandoned uranium mines on the Navajo Nation, leading to a settlement valued at over \$600 million. Rachel also oversaw the U.S. Navy's remediation of Hunter's Point Naval Shipyard and negotiated environmental protection measures related to the Navy's transfer of property in the City of San Francisco.

Describe your practice area and what it entails.

I am an environmental and sustainability lawyer. I counsel clients in three main areas: operations, products, and business strategy. In each of these areas, I help companies develop forward-thinking processes designed to achieve regulatory compliance and advance business goals, including in the area of voluntary sustainability commitments. When needed, I defend clients in environmental enforcement actions.

What types of clients do you represent?

Sustainability and ESG are topics that are important for companies in every industry. Accordingly, I represent clients in multiple industries, with a particular focus on companies that manufacture and sell products.

What types of cases/deals do you work on?

I provide a range of counseling services for clients. I especially enjoy working with clients to design and implement compliance systems, including in high-pressure situations. I joined Volkswagen as an in-house lawyer after the diesel enforce-

ment case to help the company build a new environmental, health, and safety function. I draw on that experience to help clients make smart, proactive decisions about how to manage legal risks and opportunities across the whole organization.

How did you choose this practice area?

Environmental work has always felt existential to me. We all have a responsibility to safeguard the planet we live on and ensure that all human beings can live safe, healthy lives. I wanted to spend my time focusing on that work.

What is a typical day like and/or what are some common tasks you perform?

I spend a lot of time talking with clients about their business processes and providing strategic advice about compliance and risk management. When a client identifies a potential compliance issue, I advise on what to do, including how to fix the process and whether and how to contact regulators. I also engage with government agencies on behalf of clients.

What training, classes, experience, or skills development would you recommend to someone who wishes to enter your practice area?

Try to get experience from different perspectives, whether through work experience or through having conversations with people in different types of roles. Being able to look at issues from the point of view of both a regulator and a regulated party helps with flexible thinking and the ability to identify solutions for clients. In order to give good legal advice, I also think it's important to learn about how a company operates on the ground. What are the practical realities? Seize opportunities to talk to non-lawyers and tour operational facilities, like a client manufacturing plant.

What is the most challenging aspect of practicing in this area?

Companies in multiple industries are in the midst of technology transitions right now. At the same time that companies are developing new products and operations with new and different environmental impacts, there has been a huge increase in legal requirements aimed at pushing companies to operate responsibly. These requirements include both direct regulation and reporting/disclosure rules. Helping companies navigate this changing landscape is difficult, fascinating, and rewarding.

What misconceptions exist about your practice area?

People sometimes think environmental lawyers just provide ancillary services for clients of the firm in the event that there is

a transaction with environmental concerns or litigation involving environmental contamination. In reality, environmental lawyers are great strategic partners. We have always had to understand company operations and product composition in a very practical sense, and so we are well positioned to work alongside corporate teams to develop well-founded environmental goals and integrate legal risk management into overall corporate strategy.

How do you see this practice area evolving in the future?

I think environmental lawyers will focus less on discrete problems involving individual environmental media (such as air emissions or discharges to water) and will increasingly work collaboratively with lawyers in other practice areas to provide full-service strategic support to clients.

How do you balance the different hats (from litigation to transactional work to regulatory matters) that an environmental lawyer must wear?

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