



Renee Cipriano

Partner

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PRACTICES

- Environmental Law
- Sustainability

EDUCATION

- Loyola University Chicago School of Law, J.D., 1988
- Loyola University Chicago, B.A. Sociology, 1985

ADMISSIONS

- Illinois
- Missouri
- Illinois USDC, Central District
- Illinois USDC, Northern District
- US Ct Appeals, 8th Circuit (AR, IA, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD)
- US Ct Appeals, DC Circuit

AFFILIATIONS

- American Bar Foundation, Fellow
- American College of Environmental Lawyers, Board of Regents, 2020, Secretary, 2019, Fellow, 2017-Present
- Environmental Council of the States, Alumni Association Member
- Environmental Law Institute, Leadership Circle, 2019, Board, 2018
- Justinian Society of Lawyers

Renee provides strategic counseling to companies on their most pressing environmental concerns, from statutory and regulatory requirements and legislative approaches, to litigation and major transactions. She is the former Director of the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) and previously served as the Governor of Illinois' Senior Advisor on Environment and Natural Resources.

Renee draws on her past experience, which also includes time spent as an assistant attorney general in the Environmental Control Division of the Illinois Attorney General's Office and as the Associate Director and Chief Counsel of the IEPA, to provide clients with key insight into the government's approach to environmental policymaking and enforcement.

In her representation of major manufacturers, energy companies, public utilities and other entities, Renee takes a "big picture" approach to addressing the environmental and sustainability elements of a project, new development or business plan. She carefully considers a client's ultimate goal and then crafts a smart, nuanced environmental strategy that works toward that goal in a timely, cost-effective manner, taking into consideration any needed outreach to the community, the media, third parties or lawmakers.

Renee has extensive experience in:

- Federal, state and local government approvals and local siting
- Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD) and air permitting
- National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permitting
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 404 permitting/401 certification
- Federal and state government enforcement actions
- Clean Air Act (CAA) and Clean Water Act (CWA) Citizen Suits and Third

EMPLOYMENT

- Thompson Coburn LLP Partner, 2020-Present
- Schiff Hardin LLP Partner and Deputy Leader of Environmental Group, 2007-2020
- Illinois Environmental Protection Agency Director, 2001-2005
Associate Director and Chief Counsel, 1995-1997
- Office of Illinois Governor Senior Advisor, Environment and Natural Resources, 1999-2001
- Illinois Attorney General's Office Assistant Attorney General, 1988-1993

COMMUNITY

- Innsbrook Institute, Board of Directors, 2018-Present

Party Challenges

- Federal and state rulemaking and legislation Public hearings and community outreach
- Situational and crisis management

Named multiple times as the Lawyer of the Year by The Best Lawyers in America (2012, 2019 and 2021 by BL Rankings), Renee is a Fellow of the American College of Environmental Lawyers. She has served on the Board of Directors of the Environmental Law Institute, and serves on its Leadership Council.

Industries

- Automotive
- Energy
- Manufacturing
- Real Estate
- State and Local Government

Experience

- **Senior governmental official involved in statewide environmental policymaking and enforcement**

As Director of the Illinois EPA, led the development and implementation of the state's environmental programs. Led a staff of approximately 1,100 and a budget exceeding \$1 billion.

Highlights of Renee's government service include:

- Serving as Illinois Commissioner on the Great Lakes Commission.
- Sitting on the Board of Directors for the Clean Energy Community Foundation.
- Sitting on the Special Task Force on the Condition and Future of the Illinois Energy Infrastructure.
- Launching the Green Fleets Program, the Green Dealers Program and Illinois Clean School Bus Program, which promote the use of clean fuel technology and alternative fuels.
- Leading the development and passage of numerous pieces of legislation, including legislation to promote clean coal and open lands and, as Director, the state's comprehensive Right to Know Law, which made Illinois a leader in public notification and community relations activities when the release of a contaminant is discovered.
- **Successful results on permitting issues**
Developed and implemented strategies around NPDES permitting including assisting two power companies with obtaining modifications to

water thermal limits applicable to their power plant cooling water discharge.

Negotiated solutions to several impasses involving Section 401 Certifications for Section 404 Corp permits.

Assisted numerous clients with navigating CAA and NPDES permitting, including strategies to address public and NGO opposition.

Provided comprehensive strategic counsel on PSD permitting and third-party outreach to a specialty steel and forgings plant regarding the relocation and expansion of its facility.

Assisted a new biomass electric generating facility with PSD permitting, community and government outreach and state legislation.

Regularly assist clients with developing comments on and challenges to rules promulgated by the U.S. EPA and state environmental agencies.

- **Successfully navigating government investigations and enforcement action**

Assisted several ethanol production plants with responding to Section 114 Requests and defending government enforcement actions.

Defended several CAA enforcement actions including a federal New Source Review (NSR) action and two separate actions involving NGO citizen suits alleging opacity violations.

Assisted major natural gas distribution pipeline companies with an investigation by the U.S. EPA and Illinois Attorney General into PCB Mega Rule compliance.

- **Pursuing solutions through government relations and public policy avenues**

Assisted a utility client with navigating regulatory requirements applicable to the closure of coal combustion residual (CCR) units across several power plant stations, including providing strategic counseling around closure strategies, elected official and community outreach, third party opposition.

Assisted client with drafting legislation to guide state attainment designation process and crafted strategy around citizen group influence on designation decisions.

Assisted industry with the drafting and passage of legislation authorizing the creation of a state CCR program that will operate in lieu of the federal CCR rule.

Negotiated innovative and one-of-a-kind regulations with the state of Illinois to implement a multi-pollutant strategy as part of the state's mercury regulations and to develop the state's first CCR unit closure regulations.

Led crisis management for a municipality around the emissions of ethylene oxide (EtO) from a facility located within its municipal boundaries, including the coordination with U.S. EPA and state regulators, the oversight of air monitoring efforts and toxicological evaluations and assistance with community and local official outreach.

Assisted a manufacturing plant with federal and state emergency environmental regulatory response and community outreach in response to a catastrophic fire destroying plant.

Recognitions

- Named Lawyer of the Year for Environmental Law by The Best Lawyers in America (by BL Rankings), 2021
- Listed in The Best Lawyers in America (by BL Rankings) for Environmental Law, 2009-2022
- Listed in Chambers USA (by Chambers and Partners) as a Band 1 lawyer for Environment in Missouri: St Louis & Surrounds, 2020
- Listed in Chambers USA (by Chambers and Partners) as a Band 1 lawyer for Environment: Mainly Transactional (Illinois), 2009-2019
- Chicago Daily Law Bulletin's Illinois Leading Lawyers Network, 2008-2020
- Listed in Illinois Super Lawyers (by Thomson Reuters) for Environmental Law, 2011-2020
- Listed in Who's Who Legal – Environmental, 2018-2019
- Named Lawyer of the Year for Litigation-Environmental in Illinois by The Best Lawyers in America (by BL Rankings), 2012; 2019
- Named #1 Women Transactional Lawyer by The Chicago Daily Law Bulletin, 2015
- President's Lifetime Volunteer Service Award, President's Council on Service and Civic Participation, 2011

Presentations

- "It Takes a Village - Willowbrook's Response to Ethylene Oxide", ABA Conference: Communities, Cities and Companies Combating Contaminants when Science is New, June 4, 2020
- "Know Your Surroundings' Citizen and Community Involvement in Enforcement, Legislation and Rule Development", REGFORM Enforcement and Compliance Seminar, March 25, 2020
- "The Interplay of Citizen and Community Involvement on Enforcement: Applying to your Business the Time-Tested Adage 'Know Your Surroundings'", CICI Environmental Enforcement Seminar February 13, 2020
- Co-presenter, "Environmental Policy Expectations Panel", Wabash Valley Power 2017 Member Conference, Indianapolis, August 2017
- "Balancing Industry and NGO Interests in Regulatory Development", ECOS/ACOEL Webinar Series: Working with Nongovernmental Organizations, November 2016
- "Environmental Justice", American Coal Ash Association's 2016

Summer Membership Meeting, Indianapolis, June 2016

- “Regulatory Uncertainties: Looking at Pending and Recently Enacted EPA Rules”, COAL GEN 2013 Conference, Charlotte, N.C., August 2013
- Co-presenter, “Coal on the Run?”, 19th Annual FERC Briefing, Chicago, June 2013
- Panelist, “Impact of EPA Regulations on the Electric Industry – Regional Transmission Organization Planning, Markets and Seams Issues”, 16th Annual Midwest Energy Conference, Midwest Chapter of the Energy Bar Association, March 2013

Publications

- “EPA Inspector General Sends Message to EPA: Communities Must Have Better Access to Health Risk Information” *United States Environmental Protection Agency, Office of the Inspector General (OIG) Report* March 31, 2020
- “Renee Cipriano: Public/Private Environmental Experience Sets Her Apart,” *Leading Lawyers Network* 2010