



Michael J. Hecker of Hodgson Russ. Courtesy photo.

NEWS

The Evolution of the Environmental and Energy Practice

The author writes "The Environmental & Energy Law Section (EELS) continues to be at the forefront of educating attorneys regarding practice-based legal and regulatory changes impacting New York State and the United States, more generally. This is not surprising, given the ongoing evolution of the areas of law that fall within our members' day-to-day purview."

January 13, 2025 at 10:00 AM

🕒 3 minute read

By Michael Hecker

The Environmental & Energy Law Section (EELS) continues to be at the forefront of educating attorneys regarding practice-based legal and regulatory changes impacting New York State and the United States, more generally. This is not surprising, given the ongoing evolution of the areas of law that fall within our members' day-to-day purview. EELS focuses on ensuring that relevant and timely content is made available to our members, including perspectives from different stakeholders, to ensure we understand the potential effects of these changes. We do this all, while being mindful of the change in demographics of our membership.

Building on this approach, we have an exciting agenda planned for EELS's 2025 Annual Meeting CLE program, including our annual Agency update, providing direct updates from Federal and State regulators, along with our typical panel discussion content. In particular, we have an extremely timely discussion of recent Supreme Court jurisprudence and the potential impacts on the practice of environmental law.

Though, this is not our only area of focus, as we are cognizant of the need to have panels that cover issues of relevancy to both the environmental and the energy practitioners in the section. This is especially true, given the State's focus on renewable energy, which has

been driven, in significant part, by the implementation of the Clean Energy Standard and the Climate Leadership & Community Protection Act (CLCPA) and the various components of each. Two of our other panels touch on issues applicable to both environmental and renewable energy practice, addressing important updates to changes in New York State's wetlands regulations and the new SEQRA cumulative impacts law. Finally, we have a panel focused on updates associated with the State's new Cap-and-Invest program, which ties back to meeting CLCPA greenhouse gas emission requirements.

Our section is mindful of the need to engage a more diverse subset of membership. To that end, we have several initiatives that we have deployed over the last several years. We continue to engage and conduct outreach to government attorneys regarding the benefit of section membership and networking. We have begun undertaking presentations at New York State law schools regarding the public and private aspects of our section's practice. We actively advertise and encourage law student participation in the Professor William R. Ginsburg Memorial Essay Contest, and we fund two annual Diversity & Inclusion Fellowships in the public or not-for-profit space. EELS is committed to growth. The fellowship awardees are announced at the EELS Executive Committee meeting held in conjunction with the Annual Meeting, and are invited to attend the programming and the cocktail hosted by the Section.

We are mindful of the efforts of our section's membership, and thank them, along with all of our partners across NYSBA and beyond. We look forward to partnering with some of our section brethren, given the new membership model, on helping to further grow both the EELS and NYSBA ranks!

Michael Hecker *is Chair of the Environment & Energy Law Section*

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