

## **2025 Oregon Legislative Session Recap**

### **Maureen McGee, Of Counsel, Tonkon Torp LLP**

*Maureen McGee* is an attorney Of Counsel at Tonkon Torp, where she is Co-Chair of the firm's Government Law and Disputes Group and a member of the State Government Relations & Public Policy Group. Before joining Tonkon, Maureen served lawmakers as a Senior Deputy in the Oregon Office of Legislative Counsel, where she provided nonpartisan, policy-neutral, legal drafting services and advice to all 90 members of the legislative assembly on a wide variety of legally and politically complex legislative discussions, with a focus on natural resources, energy, environment and climate policy.

At Tonkon, Maureen now utilizes her deep knowledge of the Oregon legislative process, her code drafting and technical expertise, and her relationships, to offer government affairs services for corporate, trade association, nonprofit and local government clients engaging with Oregon's legislative and executive branches. Maureen also currently serves as the Legislative Liaison for the Environment and Natural Resources Section's board, a role that supports keeping her finger on the pulse of matters relevant to today's audience. She is a graduate of the University of Puget Sound and the University of Oregon School of Law, and is a proud Salem resident.

### **Representative Ken Helm House District 27, Oregon State Legislature**

Ken Helm is the State Representative for Oregon House District 27, including the City of Beaverton and nearby communities. Among his legislative duties, he serves as Co-Chair of the House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water, as well as a member of the House Committee on Climate, Energy, and Environment. Representative Helm has also served on committees related to topics such as economic development, judiciary, and revenue. He is a Co-Chair of the Legislature's Water Caucus, a Co-Chair of the Wildlife Caucus, and a member of the Legislature's Environmental Caucus. Representative Helm holds a BA in History and Political Science from Willamette University and a Juris Doctorate from Willamette University College of Law. He built a robust practice in land use law prior to entering the Oregon Legislature in 2015.

### **Cheyenne Holliday, Director of Policy and Advocacy, Verde**

Cheyenne Holliday is a born and raised Oregonian who grew up on a small farm outside of Portland where her family rescues and rehabilitates horses. She has a background in Conflict and Dispute Resolution and has worked as a conflict resolution specialist, facilitator, and mediator. She works at Verde as the Director of Policy and Advocacy to focus on policy development, education, and outreach around economic, environmental, and racial justice issues at both the statewide and national level. In 2020 Cheyenne collaborated on and co-authored the Oregon Water Futures Report which facilitated a series of conversations with Native, Latinx, Black, and various migrant communities across the state. In her spare time, she also coaches competitive cheerleading to Oregon and Washington youth.

### **The Future of Wildfire Management on Federal Lands**

#### **Michael Karnosh, Ceded Lands Manager for the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde**

Michael began working for the Grand Ronde Tribe in 1996, shortly after earning his Bachelor's in Forestry from the University of Idaho. For over ten years he worked as a Tribal forester on the Grand Ronde Reservation, earning his Juris Doctor with a Certificate in Environmental and Natural Resources Law from Lewis and Clark Law School in 2005. After passing the Bar Exam in 2006, Michael successfully applied to be the Grand Ronde Tribe's first Ceded Lands Manager, working closely with the Tribal Attorney's Office but not practicing law in the position. The Office of Ceded Lands represents the Tribe's environmental and sovereignty interests over nearly 14 million acres of Tribal homelands. It facilitates government-to-government consultation as well as all kinds of partnerships. Ceded Lands staff have played a part in numerous habitat restoration projects and in the Tribe re-acquiring more than 2,500 acres of conservation land to date. The Office of Ceded Lands continues to fight for the protection and restoration of water, air, land, and living things.

#### **Heath Heikkila, Government Affairs Director, American Forest Resource Council**

Heath Heikkila is the Director of Government Affairs for the American Forest Resource Council (AFRC). Heath has spent over 20 years working at the intersection of government, policy, and communications advocating for solutions to some of the Pacific Northwest's most challenging natural resource issues. Heath is passionate about the things that make the Northwest a great place to live, work, and play – and working with the AFRC team to promote ideas and policies to make it even better. Heath graduated from Eastern Washington University with a B.A. in International Affairs and served as

aide in the Washington State Senate before spending 8 years in Washington, D.C. working in both the public and private sectors. He served as a Policy Advisor at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), where he primarily focused on Western environmental and fisheries issues, including Pacific salmon recovery efforts and endangered species act consultations on various activities in the region. Having worked professionally and continuing to split his time between both Washingtons – Washington state and Washington, D.C. – Heath has an appreciation for the uniqueness of the Pacific Northwest and the complexity of the issues that impact AFRC's members and their local communities. In addition to his work advocating for AFRC's members before the U.S. Congress and federal agencies, Heath is also engaged in AFRC's advocacy and state lobbying efforts in support of the active management of Department of Natural Resources state trust lands in Washington state.

### **Erin Hogan-Freemole, Staff Attorney, WildEarth Guardians**

Erin Hogan-Freemole is a staff attorney with WildEarth Guardians, where her litigation focuses on protecting public lands from irresponsible logging, road-building, and livestock grazing. She came to Guardians from Crag Law Center after clerking for Chief Justice Bolger on the Alaska State Supreme Court. Erin holds a J.D. from the University of Colorado and a B.S. in Environmental Sciences from the University of Oregon. Before law school, Erin spent nearly a decade as a wildland firefighter with the U.S. Forest Service, an experience that fostered her love for wild places across the country and her ongoing interest in fire ecology and public lands management.

### **EPA Under the Second Trump Administration**

#### **Mary Lou Soscia, Retired U.S. EPA**

Mary Lou Soscia worked for the US Environmental Protection Agency for 38 years in Washington DC and the Pacific Northwest. Protecting human health and ecosystem restoration in Indian Country throughout the US and especially in the Pacific NW was a key foundation for her work. She provided leadership for the OR human health criteria to protect high tribal fish consumers, the most protective state criteria in the nation at that time. Mary Lou created and led the Columbia River Basin Restoration Program which became a Clean Water Act amendment and received \$79 million from Congress in 2021 to reduce toxics to protect human health and increase ecosystem resilience. Mary Lou provided regional leadership for over 25 years on Columbia River water temperature issues and decisions which have become more critical and complex with a warming climate. Mary Lou has committed her retirement years to continued community service and serves on 7 Boards including WaterWatch, Salmon Safe and Human Access Project.

### **Victor Xu, Senior Associate, Marten Law**

Victor counsels businesses, municipalities, water districts, and public utilities on water quality, hazardous waste management, natural resources, and other environmental concerns. He is passionate about helping clients navigate the complex regulatory frameworks governing industrial dischargers, public water systems, publicly owned treatment works, and manufacturers.

Victor has broad expertise in litigating issues under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), the Clean Water Act (CWA), the Federal Tort Claims Act (FTCA), the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), state hazardous waste laws, federal Indian law, tort law, and unfair trade practices statutes. His practice spans federal and state courts in both trials and appeals.

Often, Victor's work intersects with emerging contaminants like PFAS. As a co-author of the PFAS Deskbook (Environmental Law Institute, 2023), and through his robust PFAS practice, Victor is well-versed in the quickly evolving litigation and regulatory landscape surrounding PFAS.

Previously, Victor clerked for the Honorable Harris Hartz in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit and the Honorable James Sweeney II in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Indiana. Victor graduated from Stanford Law School, where he led a community law pro bono and gained invaluable court experience as a member of the school's criminal prosecution clinic. Before that, he graduated from Stanford University with a Bachelor of Arts in Economics, with distinction.

### **Stephen Odell, Partner, Marten Law**

A top-tier litigator who has served in all three branches of the U.S. government, Steve has played a pivotal role in resolving some of the most complex and contentious issues in environmental, natural resources, and energy law in both the public and private sectors for more than 25 years.

Steve represents clients in federal environmental and natural resources litigation and matters involving uses of public lands and resources, federal environmental compliance, and energy development. He joined Marten following a distinguished career as a litigator for the U.S. Justice Department, where he successfully handled many of the most consequential and controversial environmental disputes in the West over the past

several decades. These cases involve resources and issues ranging from timber, mining, water quality and use, developed recreation, transportation, grazing, listed species, wetlands, and energy (encompassing production, transmission, and rate-setting) matters. Steve has served as lead litigation counsel in literally hundreds of federal cases at both the appellate and district court levels, and has been at the forefront of multiple key initiatives involving extremely sensitive environmental issues.

### **U.S. Supreme Court Roundup**

#### **Melissa Powers, Professor of Law, Lewis & Clark Law School**

Melissa Powers is a Jeffrey Bain Faculty Scholar and Professor of Law at Lewis & Clark Law School. Melissa was a Fulbright-Schuman Scholar in 2014-2015 in Denmark and Catalonia. She founded the Green Energy Institute at Lewis & Clark Law School, which she also directed for its first ten years. Melissa's teaching and scholarship focus on administrative law, climate change law, electricity regulation and the clean energy transition, and environmental law. Melissa is a board member and member-scholar of the Center for Progressive Reform and a board member of the Environmental Law Collaborative. She has taught as a visiting professor at the University of Colorado Law School, University of Miami Law School, and University of Minnesota Law School, and she teaches each year as a visitor at the University of Trento, Italy.

#### **Adell Amos, Clayton R. Hess Professor of Law, University of Oregon School of Law**

Adell L. Amos holds the Clayton R. Hess Professorship at the UO School of Law and a courtesy appointment at Oregon State University as a member of the graduate faculty for Water Resources and Policy Management program. She teaches regularly in the nationally ranked Environmental and Natural Resources Law Program, including courses in Water Law, Federal Administrative Law, Environmental Conflict Resolution, and Oregon Water Law and Policy.

Professor Amos earned her B.A in 1995 from Drury College and her J.D. in 1998 from the University of Oregon (Coif). She is a member of the Missouri bar, admitted in 1999. After law school, Amos clerked on the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals for The Honorable Procter Hug, Jr. (then Chief Judge). Amos first joined the faculty in 2005 after practicing environmental and natural resources law with the U.S. Department of Interior. In 2008, Amos accepted a two-year appointment with the Obama Administration in Washington DC as the Deputy Solicitor for Land and Water Resources at the U.S. Department of the Interior. Amos returned to UO in 2011 with renewed energy for the importance of teaching and researching in the area of water

resource management, public participation, and the role of law in the policy arena. Most recently, she served as the inaugural director of the campus wide environment initiative. This multi-year effort culminated in the creation of the Center for Climate Solutions for which she now serves as Director.

**Craig Johnston, Clayton R. Hess Professor of Law, University of Oregon  
School of Law**

Craig Johnston is a Professor of Law at Lewis & Clark Law School. Before Professor Johnston joined the faculty in fall 1991, he practiced in Boston, Massachusetts, and Portland, Oregon. As assistant regional counsel with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in Boston, Johnston worked on major enforcement matters under both the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). In Portland he founded the environmental section of the Perkins Coie Portland office and represented clients on compliance and litigation matters. In 1987 he was awarded the EPA Bronze Medal for Commendable Service; in 1985 he received the Bernard F. O'Rourke Award from Northwestern School of Law of Lewis & Clark College for excellence in the field of natural resources. Johnston has published numerous articles in the field of environmental law and has coauthored a casebook on hazardous waste law, published by West. He is also an avid runner and is the organizer of a cross-country relay effort.

**Environmental Barriers to Oregon's Renewable Energy Transition**

**Mike Goetz, Regulatory Affairs Director, Renewable Northwest**

Mike Goetz joined Renewable Northwest in January 2025 as Regulatory Affairs Director. In his role, Mike is responsible for leading the development of the organization's state regulatory and markets and transmission strategy in Oregon, Washington, Montana, and Idaho. Mike engages in a wide variety of proceedings before state utility regulatory commissions, the Bonneville Power Administration, and regional forums related to electricity markets and transmission expansion. Previously, Mike served as Senior Policy and Regulatory Counsel at the NW Energy Coalition, and as general counsel for Oregon's residential utility consumer advocate for eight years. Mike serves on the executive committee of the Oregon State Bar's Energy, Telecom, and Utilities section and served on Renewable Northwest's Board of Directors for six years, including one year as Board Chair. Mike attended the University of Oregon School of Law, graduating with a J.D. and a certificate of completion in Environmental and Natural Resources Law and received a B.S. in Earth Systems, Environment & Society from the University of Illinois. Originally from the Chicago suburbs, Mike has adopted

the Pacific Northwest as his chosen home, where he spends his free time exploring wild areas on skis, bicycle, and by foot.

**Sarah Esterson, Regulatory Affairs Director, Renewable Northwest**

Sarah Esterson is the Senior Policy Advisor at the Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE), Siting Division. She has been in this position for 4 years, and with ODOE for 11 years. In her position, she acts as a team lead for permit (site certificate) reviews for utility scale energy facilities and provides guidance on regulatory interpretation and application. She is also responsible for tracking legislation and making recommendations during session regarding statutory changes to support or clarify the regulatory process for energy facility siting. She has a Bachelor of Science in Public Affairs, with a concentration in Environmental Management, Policy and Law from Indiana University; and a Master's in Public Administration from University of Colorado-Denver.

**Caroline Moore, Acting Director Energy Program, Oregon Public Utility Commission**

Caroline Moore is the Acting Director of the Public Utility Commission of Oregon's (OPUC) Energy Program, and as part of her role, oversees the implementation of Oregon's landmark House Bill 2021 (Clean Energy) and House Bill 2475 (Energy Equity). Caroline has experience working on several sides of Oregon's utility sector, serving for eight years as OPUC Staff, and, prior to that, working in the renewable markets industry and in customer solutions at PacifiCorp.

**Privilege, Generative AI in the Practice of Law, and the Intersection of the Two**

**Nellie Barnard, Schwabe, Williamson & Wyatt**

Nellie Barnard provides legal ethics and risk management advice to lawyers, law firms, law students, and in-house legal departments. She also represents Oregon and Washington lawyers in attorney discipline matters and character and fitness proceedings, including on appeal. Nellie appreciates the obstacles that lawyers and law firms face in the practice and the business of law and works collaboratively with clients to minimize the risk of liability, including issues involving conflicts of interest, sanctions, privilege, client confidentiality, engagement, and withdrawal procedures, multi-jurisdictional practice, lawyer-client relationships, fee disputes, and practice planning and management. She helps lawyers and law firms address the boundaries involving attorney advertising and marketing, including issues particular to social

media, client solicitation, business relationships with non-lawyers, and fee sharing. Nellie also serves as deputy general counsel for her firm.