

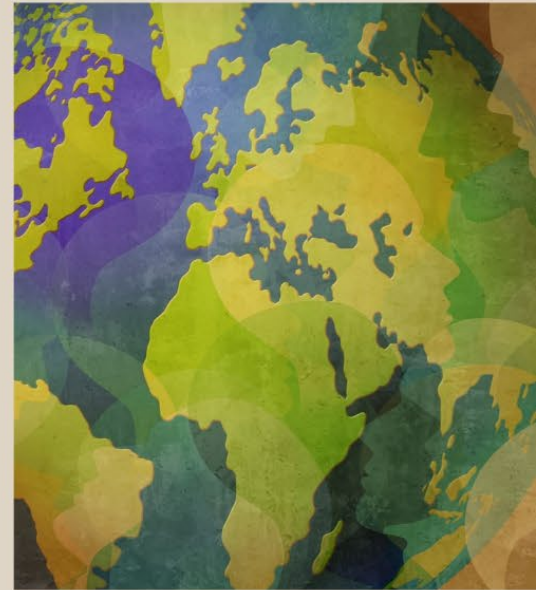
CELEBRATING

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ABA

AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION

Environment, Energy,
and Resources Section
YEARS OF SEER
1926–2026



2027 Environmental Justice Symposium

January 15, 2027

ambar.org/seerEJS

George Washington
University Law School
Washington, DC



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About the Symposium

At a time of rapid change in environmental law and policy, the fight for environmental justice has never been more urgent. Join environmental, energy, and resources practitioners in Washington, D.C. for the Environmental Justice Symposium, hosted by the ABA Section of Environment, Energy, and Resources.

The ABA Section of Environment, Energy, and Resources 2027 Environmental Justice Symposium will occur on Friday, January 15, 2027 at the George Washington University Law School, providing attendees a full day exploring the evolving landscape of environmental justice (EJ) law and practice.

Practitioners, advocates, regulators, and scholars will come together for wide-ranging discussions on the issues shaping EJ today. Sessions will examine how land use, permitting, and infrastructure decisions affect frontline and Tribal communities, and how communities are fighting for water access and protection amid a shifting legal landscape. The day will also feature the everyday practice of EJ law beyond the courtroom, and to the opportunities and risks posed by emerging technologies and changing state power in shaping a just future. The symposium will conclude with a networking social hour, giving attendees the chance to connect with fellow practitioners, advocates, and scholars.

We hope you'll join us in Washington, D.C. for a day of timely discussion, practical insight, and community!

SEER Section Chair

- **Marisa Blackshire**, Vice President, Environment and Regulatory Law, Bloom Energy, San Jose, CA

Education Officer

- **Rita Bolt Barker**, Wyche, Greenville, SC

Conference Planning Chair

- **Heather Tanana**, Assistant Professor of Law, University of Denver – Sturm College of Law, Denver, CO

Planning Committee

- **Stacey Halliday**, Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer LLP, Washington, DC
- **Cynthia Rose Harris**, LL.M. Candidate, University of Mississippi, Center for Air and Space Law, San Diego, CA
- **James May**, Richard S. Righter Distinguished Professor of Law, Washburn University School of Law, Topeka, KS
- **Telsula C. Morgan**, Lewis, Longman & Walker P.A., West Palm Beach, FL

About ABA SEER

The American Bar Association Section of Environment, Energy, and Resources (ABA SEER) fosters the success of a diverse community of environmental, energy, and resources lawyers, advisors, decision-makers, and students and provides a premier forum for the exchange of ideas and information. SEER is a meeting place where practitioners can find the most current and sophisticated analyses of the complicated issues facing their practice.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging Mission and Goals

The Section of Environment, Energy, and Resources is committed to enhancing and promoting diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging within the Section and within the environmental, energy, and resources (EER) bar overall. SEER understands that a diverse Section and EER bar—made up of people of color; women; LGBTQ+ persons; persons with mental, physical, and sensory disabilities; younger attorneys; as well as attorneys from the government, non-profit, academia, and solo-practice sectors—add great value to the legal profession. Learn more at Wednesday's Beginnings and Belonging Reception.

Symposium Agenda

All times listed in Eastern Time

Friday, January 15, 2027

8:00 AM - 9:00 AM

Continental Breakfast

8:45 AM - 9:30 AM

Welcome & Keynote Address

To be announced

9:45 AM - 11:00 AM

Justice by Design: Environmental Justice in Land Use Decisions and Infrastructure

As communities across the county confront unprecedented growth, land use and permitting decisions have become some of the most consequential environmental justice issues of our time. The rapid expansion of data centers, renewable energy infrastructure, industrial development, and housing has intensified competition for resources - often disproportionately affecting historically marginalized and Tribal communities. This panel will examine how land use and planning, zoning approvals, and environmental permitting can either advance or undermine environmental justice principles, with particular attention to the growing footprint of data centers and their demands on water supplies, electric grids, and surrounding communities. The discussion will highlight the unique legal status of Tribal Nations, the importance of meaningful government-to-government consultation, and the protection of Tribal rights when development occurs on or near Tribal lands.

Attendees will leave with practical insights into ensuring that land use and permitting decisions promote resilience, respect Tribal sovereignty, and deliver equitable outcomes for all communities in an era of accelerating growth and technological change.

PANELISTS

Lydia Dexter, Attorney, Cultural Heritage Partners, PLLC, Richmond, VA

Danielle Stokes (Moderator), Associate Professor of Law & Director of Merhige Center, University of Richmond School of Law, Richmond, VA

Clifford Villa, Professor of Law, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM

Panel Liaison: Telsula C. Morgan, Lewis, Longman & Walker, P.A., West Palm Beach, FL

11:00 AM - 11:30 AM

Networking Break

11:30 AM - 12:45 PM

From Drinking Water Access to Living Rivers: the Fight for Water in a Shifting Legal Landscape

Water remains one of the most pressing environmental justice issues in the United States. Since 2010, the UN has recognized access to clean water and sanitation as a fundamental human right. Yet, more than 2 million people nationwide lack access to running water or a working toilet. Meanwhile, climate-driven changes to water

quantity and quality are straining water rights, public health, and broader ecosystems – even as both the Supreme Court (through *Sackett v. EPA*) and the executive branch are rolling back federal safeguards for vulnerable communities and waterways. This panel will examine the evolving legal landscape and explore how communities are advancing innovative legal frameworks in response. Panelists will discuss efforts to secure safe and affordable drinking water as well as groundbreaking developments in the protection of water bodies, including Tribal recognition of rivers as living entities. Attendees will learn how Tribal sovereignty, creative legal strategies, and coalition-building can advance water justice for underserved communities across the country.

PANELISTS

Robert Glicksman, J. B. and Maurice C. Shapiro Professor of Environmental Law, George Washington University Law School, Washington, DC

Shannon Swimmer, Tribal Council Representative, Eastern Band of Cherokee, Cherokee, NC

*Panel Liaison: James R. May, Richard S. Righter
Distinguished Professor of Law, Washburn University
School of Law, Topeka, KS*

1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

Luncheon

2:00 PM – 3:15 PM

Beyond the Courtroom: Building Environmental Justice Through Everyday Legal Practice

The work of environmental justice can extend well beyond litigation and policy advocacy. This panel explores three concrete entry points for meaningful EJ engagement: providing pro bono organizational defense and technical assistance for nonprofits facing legal challenges or institutional threats; advising community-based organizations

navigating the increasingly complex landscape of grant compliance, especially as federal funding streams face termination, clawback, and litigation risk; and drafting model legislation that translates community priorities into enforceable state and local law. Panelists will share firsthand experience helping grassroots and nonprofit organizations build institutional resilience, avoid compliance pitfalls that jeopardize funding, and shape statutory language that withstands legal and political scrutiny. Using a hybrid presentation and workshop format, attendees will leave with actionable frameworks for volunteering their skills, identifying organizations seeking pro bono support, and understanding how a wide range of legal skills and experience can translate into environmental justice work.

PANELISTS

Hana Vizcarra, Deputy Managing Attorney for National Climate, Earthjustice, Washington, DC

*Panel Liaison: Stacey Halliday, Arnold & Porter Kaye
Scholer LLP, Washington, DC*

3:45 PM – 5:00 PM

Satellites, Small Modular Reactors, and State Power: the Future of Environmental Justice

How can environmental attorneys help make the future work for everyone? Three key developments highlight both potential benefits and drawbacks for frontline and Tribal communities. Earth observation satellite technology facilitates natural resource management and environmental activism—but exposes cultural resources to highly targeted exploitation. Innovation in nuclear reactor design promises a cost-effective and reliable source of zero-carbon energy—while raising questions about uranium mining's upstream impacts, siting reactors, and storing radioactive waste. In the meantime, a federal push for rolling back environmental regulation disproportionately impacts certain populations—unless state and Tribal governments step up to fill the gap. In the first half, our panelists

will summarize these trends, explain the frameworks governing them, and highlight where regulation falls short. The second half will engage participants in a problem-solving roundtable discussion. The goal is to identify next steps attorneys—whether associated with private firms, the public sector, or academia—can take to promote an environmentally just version of the future.

PANELISTS

Eric Jantz, Legal Director, New Mexico
Environmental Law Center, Albuquerque, NM
Kristen Soares (Moderator), State Climate Policy
Network Manager, Climate Xchange, Boston, MA

*Panel Liaison: Cynthia Rose Harris, LL.M. Candidate,
University of Mississippi, Center for Air and Space Law,
San Diego, CA*

5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Networking Reception

Symposium Details

Registration

SYMPOSIUM REGISTRATION RATES*

Section Member	\$260
ABA Member	\$355
General Attendee.....	\$450
Academic/Govt./Public Interest.....	\$100
Law Student.....	\$0

*Attendees from George Washington University Law School are eligible for complimentary registration. Please email environ@americanbar.org for more information.

REGISTRATION FEES

The Symposium registration fee includes tuition and online course materials developed especially for this program. In addition, your fee covers the continental breakfast, breaks, luncheon and an offsite reception with a cash bar.

HOW TO REGISTER

We encourage you to register online at ambar.org/seerEJS. All attendees must be preregistered for this Symposium to participate.

More Ways to Save

ATTENTION ABA MEMBERS!

If you are an ABA member but not a member of the Section of Environment, Energy, and Resources, your conference registration fee now includes Section membership, a \$95 value! You will be automatically enrolled in the Section. ABA membership is a prerequisite of Section membership. If you are not already an ABA member, please call (800) 285-2221. Free membership only applies to individuals who have not been a member of the Section during the past two years.

GROUP DISCOUNT

Organizations registering three or more attendees are eligible for a group discount of 20% off each attendee's registration. Please email environ@americanbar.org for more information.

TUITION ASSISTANCE

A limited number of registration fee waivers are available for government employees, employees of nonprofit organizations, academics, and individuals who are retired, unemployed, or furloughed. SEER membership is not required to qualify for this assistance.

Qualifying applicants may receive at least a 50% reduction, and up to 100% reduction, in conference registration fees.

Apply [here](#). The online application must be received by midnight Eastern Time on Tuesday, December 1, 2026. No late submissions will be considered. You will be notified of decisions by Friday, December 18, 2026.

Event Cancellation Policy

Registrants who are unable to attend the program will receive a refund less a \$50 administrative fee if written notice of cancellation is received by January 1, 2027. No refunds will be granted after this date. Cancellations may be emailed to environ@americanbar.org. Substitute attendees for the program are acceptable. The ABA reserves the right to cancel any program and assumes no responsibility for personal expenses.

Location

The 2027 Environmental Justice Symposium will be held at the George Washington University Law School at 2000 H Street Northwest, Washington, DC 20052.

Lodging

There is no hotel room block secured for this event. However, the symposium is located near several hotels. ABA Members can take advantage of exclusive discounts on airfare, hotels, and car rentals available here.

Listed below are a few hotel options close to George Washington University Law School:

- [Courtyard by Marriott Washington, DC/Foggy Bottom](#)
- [Tempo by Hilton Washington DC Downtown](#)
- [ARC Hotel, Washington DC, Series by Marriott](#)
- [Yours Truly DC Hotel - Vignette Collection by IHG](#)

CLE Credit

The ABA will seek 5 hours of CLE credit in 60-minute states, and 6 hours of CLE credit for this program in 50-minute states. Credit hours are estimated and are subject to each state's approval and credit rounding rules. Please visit americanbar.org/mcle for general information on CLE at the ABA.

Symposium Course Materials

Course materials and related background information will be provided to attendees online prior to the program. You may wish to bring a device to view the materials on-site.

Symposium Mobile App—Eventsential

The Symposium will use the Eventsential mobile event platform, offering easy access to the Symposium schedule, speaker details, sponsor information, and more. One week prior to the Symposium, registrants will receive an email from the American Bar Association (noreply@rdmobile) with instructions on how to log in to the platform.

Book Discount

Symposium registrants can save 20% on books published by the Section. Discount information will be provided after registration and onsite at the Conference. Complete your library with our latest releases!

Dietary Restrictions

If you have any dietary restrictions, please indicate so during registration or by email to environ@americanbar.org by Friday, January 1, 2027 so that your needs are noted.

Dress

Section meetings are business casual. Suggested dress includes slacks, skirts, polo-type shirts or blouses, sweaters, and comfortable shoes. The venue may be cool, so please bring a jacket or sweater.

Health & Safety

The ABA takes the health and safety of our members, guests, and staff seriously. We know that the decision whether to attend a meeting is based upon a variety of personal and business considerations. We will continue to monitor a variety of sources, including the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and U.S. state and local health authorities for the

latest public health updates, as well as applicable restrictions on events and gatherings. The ABA plans to hold this meeting in person but reserves the right to cancel or reschedule this event or convert it to a virtual event if health and safety restrictions require it. We will update the registrants and the website should the plans for this event change.

As part of the registration process to hold this ABA meeting in person, every attendee is required to affirm their commitment to comply with the in-person meeting guidelines. Please review the requirements carefully when registering for the meeting.

Americans with Disabilities Act

If any special arrangements are required for a person with a disability to attend this program, please contact Associate Director, Rachel Rojas-Brennan at rachel.rojasbrennan@americanbar.org.

ABA Business Conduct Standards

Event attendees are required to review and consent to the [ABA Business Conduct Standards](#).

Photos and Recordings

Photos and recordings may be captured during this event. As part of the registration process, event attendees must review and consent to the event waiver and release of liability of images and recordings.

Charitable Contributions

ACHIEVING CARBON NEUTRALITY

The Section estimates that the average Spring Conference attendee's participation will generate approximately one metric ton of carbon emissions. To help offset the conference's carbon footprint, please consider donating \$20 towards the purchase of carbon offsets when registering. The Section will purchase credits from a verified offset project.

All contributions are received by ABA's Fund for Justice and Education and are tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law. Donations can be made at the time of registration or anytime online at ambar.org/DonateToSEER.

CONFERENCE SPEAKER SUPPORT

The Section strives to provide programming representing a unique depth of perspectives on all issues. We consistently work to include speakers that represent tribal interests and NGOs, as well as academics. To assist these speakers with the expense of participating in our conferences, the Section offers a limited number of travel reimbursements. To assure that the Section can continue to offer travel assistance to such speakers, please consider donating to our Program Support Fund. Donations are tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law. Make your donation when you register or anytime online at ambar.org/DonateToSEER.

QUESTIONS?

Contact environ@americanbar.org with all program-related questions.