

Business Heats up for Climate Change Lawyers

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More than three years ago, Denver-based [Holland & Hart LLP](#) created one of the first law firm climate change practice groups. As one of the largest natural resources law firms in the U.S., the firm wanted to be ahead of the curve on an issue that is "coloring everything," says James Holtkamp, head of the practice group and resident in the firm's Salt Lake City office. At that time, federal carbon regulation in the U.S. was still a distant prayer, and although some might argue it still is, with recent moves by various entities to regulate carbon emissions, climate change lawyers are busier than ever.

"Until recently, climate change law in the United States was literally and figuratively a lot of hot air," says Holtkamp. "But the EPA has been rolling out rulemakings-and now there are real, live regulations we've seen an uptick in work. Clients are calling us asking: what does this mean for my business?"

"We have been busy on the energy side, and all the new regulations are creating even more business," notes Stephan Gordon, a partner in the New York office of [Beveridge & Diamond PC](#), a firm that concentrates in all aspects of environmental law and litigation.

The regulations fueling this growth include moves by the Environmental Protection Agency to monitor and control greenhouse gas emissions, as well as action taken by various states, localities and industry groups. For example, the National Association of Insurance Commissioners recently put forward a standard for mandatory disclosure by insurance companies of financial risks due to climate change and actions taken to mitigate them. The trend has taken on an even greater importance, with the recent introduction of "The American Power Act" in the Senate, sponsored by John Kerry and Joe Lieberman, which would regulate emissions on a national level and may introduce a cap-and-trade scheme in the United States.

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