



David R. Zoppo

PARTNER

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OVERVIEW

David draws on more than a decade representing major utility companies in his energy and environmental practice.

David has extensive experience representing investor-owned utilities and other clients in administrative contested case proceedings before the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, including electric and natural gas rate cases, certificate of public convenience and necessity, and other forms of administrative litigation. While he primarily handles Wisconsin matters, he has done similar work in Iowa, Illinois, and Minnesota.

In addition, David represents utilities, manufacturers, oil refineries, and other clients in environmental law and regularly advises on compliance with and permitting under both the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act. He also handles environmental litigation and enforcement defense, working with clients to evaluate, resolve, and implement corrective actions related to allegations of noncompliance. While David often assists clients in settling these matters during the pre-litigation phase through consent decrees and consent orders, he has represented clients in enforcement proceedings in both state and federal court where

“David Zoppo understands our business very well, he has a very good tone, he’s level-headed and he’s a pleasure to work with.”

— Chambers USA 2025

Industry

Energy & Natural Resources

Service

Energy Regulation

settlement is not possible. David also represents a diverse array of clients in a variety of complex commercial litigation matters in state and federal court.

As a law student with an interest in energy and environmental law, David had the opportunity to co-author *A Smarter, Greener Grid: Forging Environmental Progress through Smarter Energy Policies and Technologies* with a professor. This project helped foster his passion and interest in energy policy and regulation as utilities, policymakers, and other stakeholders continue to navigate the significant change and transition in the energy sector. Upon graduation, David began working with major natural gas and transmission utilities at his first firm, and his practice grew rapidly from there. He is fascinated by the complexity of the energy industry and by the wide variety of disciplines, from accounting to engineering to economics to the law, that are implicated in this space.

Known for a work ethic that leaves him willing to assist clients in any way at any time, David has built a reputation for an efficiency born of his years of experience in the industry. He knows the energy world and its regulatory environment, and he knows how to navigate legal processes quickly for clients. David also has a keen ability to understand clients' core business interests and develop legal strategies to advance those interests. His goal is always to offer legal advice that carefully considers the client's broader strategic objectives.

Experience

- Represented transmission utility in connection with its application to construct new double-circuit 138 kV transmission line in southeastern Wisconsin before the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin. The proceeding was dynamic and highly contested by several nearby landowners. Our engagement covered application drafting and submission; drafting of pre-filed testimony; responding to agency and intervenor discovery; defending the application at technical hearings; and handling post-hearing briefing and appeals.
- Represented transmission utility in intervention before the Minnesota Public Utility Commission regarding upgrades to existing transmission facility. Engagement covered preparing and responding to discovery, submitting pre-filed testimony, defending witnesses at technical hearing, and drafting post-hearing briefs.

Experience

- Representing transmission utility in proceedings before Public Service Commission of Wisconsin to construct large, \$1.5 billion regional transmission project in north central Wisconsin. Our engagement covered application drafting and submission; drafting of pre-filed testimony; responding to agency and intervenor discovery; defending the application at technical hearings; and handling post-hearing briefing.
- Representing local distribution company in application to adjust electric and natural gas rates before the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin. Our engagement covered application drafting and submittal, responding to agency and intervenor discovery requests, drafting testimony, representing the company at technical hearings, and preparing post-hearing briefing.
- Represented independent renewable energy developer in proceedings before the Minnesota Public Utility Commission regarding a local investor-owned utilities' application to procure firm dispatchable generation. Helped client navigate and negotiate a global settlement with utility, state agencies, and other intervenors.
- Represented transmission utility in connection with the application to construct a \$500 million transmission line and substation project to serve new data center load in southeastern Wisconsin. Our engagement covered application drafting and submission; drafting of pre-filed testimony; responding to agency and intervenor discovery; defending the application at technical hearings; and handling post-hearing briefing.
- Represented local electric distribution company in prosecuting complaint before the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin regarding another utility's alleged violation of electric service territorial rules. The engagement covered the drafting and filing of the complaint, issuing and responding to discovery, drafting pre-filed testimony, and appearing at technical hearing.
- Successfully negotiated settlement with defendant to resolve allegations in the complaint.

Experience

- Represented local electric distribution company in connection with efforts to terminate federal Clean Air Act consent decree. Conducted detailed review of consent decree, air permits, and associated reports to verify that requirements of the Consent Decree had been satisfied. Engaged in discussions and negotiations with DOJ, EPA, and NGO, which resulted in stipulated motion for termination of consent decree.

Recognition

- *Chambers USA*
 - Natural Resources & Environment, 2019-2025
 - Up and Coming Environment & Natural Resources Attorney, 2020-2022
- *Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch® in America*
 - Energy Law, 2023-2025
 - Environmental Law, 2025
- Wisconsin Super Lawyers
 - Rising Star, Environment, 2022

Education

- J.D., Vermont Law School
 - *summa cum laude*
 - *Vermont Law Review*
- B.A., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Admissions

- Wisconsin
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Seventh Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Tenth Circuit
- U.S. District Court, Western District of Wisconsin
- U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Wisconsin

Community Leadership

David often represents environmental organizations in pro bono cases, including several recent lawsuits over the public lands management in Wisconsin.



2025 Best Lawyers Ones to Watch