



Stephen E. O'Day

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Areas of Practice

Administrative Law | Arbitration | Energy Law | Environmental/Natural Resources Law | Insurance Law | Litigation/Trial Practice | Mediation | Manufacturing | Sustainability Practice | Worker Safety and OSHA

Stephen E. O'Day is Partner and Head of the Environmental Law, Energy, and Sustainability Practices at Smith, Gambrell & Russell, LLP.

The Environmental Practice Group handles all aspects of traditional environmental legal issues and OSHA compliance. The Energy Practice Group assists clients with energy acquisitions, development and procurement, for all kinds of energy sources. SGR's Sustainability Practice Group provides focused legal advice and representation to companies and entities regarding sustainability initiatives, sustainable businesses and business practices, renewable energy, business issues, planning, and litigation.

Mr. O'Day has handled environmental and energy litigation, consultation and negotiations for over 40 years. He advises clients in connection with the full range of environmental issues, including National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits and Clean Water Act compliance, Clean Air permits and compliance, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act permitting and compliance including solid and hazardous waste treatment, disposal and cleanups, Superfund cleanups and litigation, toxic tort claims, Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act permitting and compliance, Toxic Substances Control Act compliance, OSHA compliance, water law and other environmental matters. He handles administrative proceedings at state and federal levels in connection with issues ranging from usage of real property to compliance with federal and state environmental and safety laws. He represents clients in litigation across the country involving environmental matters such as toxic tort litigation, nuisance litigation, hazardous waste cleanups, including sites both on and off the NPL, Clean Water Act citizen suits and compliance litigation, facilities compliance with the Resource, Conservation and Recovery Act, mold litigation, landfill issues and OSHA citation appeals and whistleblower proceedings.

He also assists clients in environmental issues in real property acquisition and development, and the development, acquisition and sale of manufacturing, energy, solar, wind, landfill gas, biomass and hydro energy, and other entities and projects.

Mr. O'Day is a frequent speaker at seminars concerning sustainability, environmental liability and compliance and risk management. He has been selected for inclusion in Georgia Super Lawyers and Chambers USA: America's Leading Lawyers for Business in the area of environmental law since the inception of those lists. He has been named as a Best Environmental Lawyer in Corporate Counsel magazine and recognized as one of The Best Lawyers in America® in environmental law.

Mr. O'Day has received the Award for Service to the Profession of Environmental Law presented by the State Bar of Georgia, Environmental Law Section; has received the Chattahoochee Riverkeeper's highest honor, the River Guardian Award, for years of community service in protecting the river that provides Metropolitan Atlanta's water supply, as well as the James S. Dockery, Jr. Southern Environmental Leadership Award, and the Ogden Doremus Award for Excellence in Environmental Law.

Mr. O'Day is now serving on the Boards of the Southeast Energy Efficiency Alliance, the Greenhouse Accelerator, the Southern Environmental Law Center, the Chattahoochee Riverkeeper, and the Southern Property Rights Council. He is active in the Litigation, Environment, Energy and Resources, and Tort Trial and Insurance Practice Sections of the American Bar Association.

Mr. O'Day served as Chairman of the Environmental Advisory Council for Georgia's Lieutenant Governor for eight years and on an Advisory Committee to the Georgia Pollution Prevention Assistance Division. and the Governor's Rivercare 2000 Task Force. He also served on the State of Georgia's Solid Waste Planning Task Force, on the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce's Water Quality Task Force and as Chairman of the Solid Waste Task Force. He led the Environmental Collaborative of the Atlanta Regional Commission's award-winning Vision 2020 planning effort. He teaches environmental law as a part-time instructor at the Georgia Institute of Technology.

He studied Civil Engineering at the Georgia Institute of Technology and earned a B.A. degree, summa cum laude, in Political Science from Furman University in 1976. He received his J.D. degree, cum laude, from Harvard Law School in 1979. While at Harvard, Mr. O'Day served as Chairman of the Harvard Environmental Law Society.

Experience

- Representation of company as alleged PRP at Superfund site in Texas
- Removal and conveyance of potential waste materials from rental tanks in New York rented by bankrupt company
- Representation of company regarding alleged air pollution issues at facility in Virginia

- Acquisition of brownfield facilities in Georgia and enrollment in State Brownfield program
- Defense of alleged labeling violations by Consumer Product Safety Commission, and of class action claim alleging violations of Federal Hazardous Substance Act
- Acquisition and development of utility scale solar project in North Carolina, including acquisition agreement, consulting and EPC, PPA and Interconnection agreements with utility
- Numerous electricity, natural gas, and fuel supply agreements and acquisition of energy projects across the country
- Representation of golf club in Johns Creek, Georgia concerning acquisition of irrigation water
- Acquisition and development of landfill gas to energy project in West Virginia, including agreements relating to consulting, EPC, interconnection with utility, and sale of power
- Representation of solar company in Georgia in development of dozens of solar projects providing energy to customers under Georgia's Solar Power Free-Market Financing Act of 2015

Admissions

Georgia

U.S. District Court Northern Districts of Georgia

U.S. District Court Middle District of Georgia

U.S. District Court Southern District of Georgia

U.S. District Court Eastern District of Michigan

U.S. Court of Appeals, Fourth Circuit

U.S. Court of Appeals, Fifth Circuit

U.S. Court of Appeals, Eleventh Circuit

U.S. Court of Federal Claims

U.S. Supreme Court

Memberships

Metropolitan Atlanta Chamber of Commerce

Southern Environmental Law Center

Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper

Leadership Atlanta

Midtown Alliance – Greenprint Midtown, Executive Advisory Council

Southeast Rainwater Harvesting Systems Association Board

Green Chamber of the South Foundation Board

Litigation, Environment, Energy and Resources, and Tort Trial and Insurance Practice Sections, American Bar Association

Georgia Property Rights Council

Recognitions

Chambers USA, Environment, Georgia (2009-2025)

Georgia Super Lawyers, Environmental Law

The Best Lawyers in America®, Atlanta, Energy Law; Environmental Law; Litigation - Environmental (2006-2026)

Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper River Guardian Award

Southern Environmental Law Center James S. Dockery, Jr. Southern Environmental Leadership Award

Ogden Doremus Award for Excellence in Environmental Law

Award for Service to the Profession of Environmental Law presented by the State Bar of Georgia, Environmental Law Section

Georgia Trend magazine - Legal Elite

Best Environmental Lawyer - Corporate Counsel