

Environment & Natural Resources Division

Who We Are & What We Do



The Environment and Natural Resources Division (ENRD) is the nation's largest environmental law firm with approximately 590 employees, including over 400 attorneys. ENRD handles environmental and natural resources litigation on behalf of the United States. The work of the Division arises under approximately 150 federal civil and criminal statutes, including the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, CERCLA, Safe Drinking Water Act, Endangered Species Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, National Environmental Policy Act, Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act, and Tucker Act. Learn more about ENRD at <https://www.justice.gov/enrd>.

Organization

The Division is organized into nine litigating sections, an Office of Environmental Justice and an Executive Office. ENRD's primary office is in Washington, D.C., with our main field offices in Denver and San Francisco. We currently have over 7,000 active cases and matters and represents virtually every federal agency in courts in all fifty states, territories, and possessions.

History

The richness and complexity of the Division's history is inseparable from the larger story of the growth and maturation of American society in the 20th Century. In 1909, the "The Public Lands Division" of the DOJ was created to address the critical litigation concerning "enforcement of the Public Land Law." As the nation grew and developed, so did the responsibilities of the Division, and its name changed to the "Environment and Natural Resources Division" (ENRD) to better reflect those responsibilities.

Each new generation of ENRD attorneys builds on the work of those who have come before. As we work, we are mindful of the strong legacy that we have inherited and the future opportunities that stretch before us.

Environment & Natural Resources Division

Office & Section Overview



Office of Environmental Justice

- Engages all Justice Department bureaus, components and offices in the collective pursuit of environmental justice.
- Strengthens our partnerships with community advocates and other stakeholders.

Environmental Defense Section

- Litigates district court challenges to agency actions under federal pollution control laws, and federal facility and cleanup contribution claims against federal agencies.
- Defends of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency rules and other actions challenged directly in the courts of appeals.

Indian Resources Section

- Represents the United States in litigation to protect tribal lands, resources, jurisdiction, and treaty rights.
- Defends federal statutes, regulations, programs, and actions benefitting Indian tribes and their members.

Natural Resources Section

- Defends suits relating to public lands and federal land management, as well as associated natural and cultural resources, under dozens of statutes such as the National Environmental Policy Act, the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, and the National Historic Preservation Act.
- Handles original actions in the U.S. Supreme Court to resolve boundary and water allocation disputes.

Appellate Section

- Handles appeals and petitions for review in the Division's cases in courts of appeals across the Nation.
- Assists the Office of the Solicitor General in U.S. Supreme Court matters.

Environmental Enforcement Section

- Brings civil enforcement actions under federal pollution control laws such as the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, and Safe Drinking Water Act.
- Handles cases to secure cleanup, cost recovery, and damages for injury to natural resources resulting from hazardous waste sites and oil spills under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act and the Oil Pollution Act.

Land Acquisition Section

- Acquires real estate through eminent domain for Congressionally-authorized public uses.
- Enables development of flood protection projects, military training sites, park sites, and federal buildings such as courthouses.

Wildlife & Marine Resources Section

- Litigates cases brought under federal wildlife and marine species conservation laws, including the Endangered Species Act, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, and Marine Mammal Protection Act.

Environmental Crimes Section

- Prosecutes individuals and corporations who violate federal environmental protection laws, including the Clean Water Act and the Clean Air Act.
- Brings criminal actions to protect wildlife and marine species under the Endangered Species Act and the Lacey Act, including wildlife trafficking cases.

Executive Office

- Provides operational management and administrative support for the Division, including financial management, human resources, information technology, procurement, facilities, security, litigation support, and other important services.

Law & Policy Section

- Addresses cross-cutting issues, including by reviewing policies, regulations, legislation, and international matters affecting the Division.
- Assists with amicus filings and certain other litigation.