

## Eric Johnson and Mike Blankenship Discuss Coronavirus-Related Cancellation of International Energy Event

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Winston & Strawn Partners Eric Johnson and Mike Blankenship discussed the cancellation of the annual CERAWeek Global Energy Conference due to coronavirus concerns. The event's sponsor, IHS Markit, released a statement from the World Health Organization noting that "border health checks are becoming more restrictive and there is growing concern about large conferences with people coming from different parts of the world." Delegates from more than 80 countries were expected to attend.

According to the article, many of the scheduled talks on future oil and gas industry trends touched on topics of energy transition, from low-carbon transportation fuels to the future prospects of global liquefied natural gas.

"This is the biggest issue on the table," Eric said. "The entire industry is under this incredible pressure to make change, and this perfect chance for everybody to get together just got killed."

This year's conference may have been the most consequential yet, as climate change has forced a rethink of the future of energy to include moving from fossil fuels to zero-carbon technologies. Also impacted are the behind-the-scenes areas, where a lot of deals are struck. "You'll have a decreased volume in deal-making because people aren't talking," Mike said.

"When we just have our pure lawyer hat on, when we think about CERAWeek, we think about deal makers getting together and talking about deals," Eric said. "Getting a feel for the attitude and demeanor of those guys and what they think 2020 M&A might look like, that's been lost on our side for sure."

For more on this topic, read the full Law360 article [here](#).

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