



Environmental, Social & Governance (ESG)

Winston's Environmental, Social, & Governance (ESG) Advisory Team synthesizes the firm's multidisciplinary experience to help boards, management teams, and investors oversee the complete spectrum of ESG-related legal and business issues.

Amid an ever-changing business and regulatory environment, it's clear that the most resilient and successful businesses are placing ESG principles at the forefront of their core values and leveraging those principles to chart a path for financial success and future growth to the benefit of all their stakeholders, including employees, customers, vendors, local communities, and stockholders.

Drawing from deep experience, our ESG team focuses on matters relating to:

- ESG reporting and messaging, including development of an ESG strategy, reporting framework selection, identifying third-party consultants and vendors to assist with program implementation, and ESG report drafting;
- board oversight of ESG risks and the establishment of related corporate principles and values;
- sustainable finance and lending, including green bonds, social bonds, transition bonds, and sustainability linked loans;
- corporate governance;
- shareholder activism and crisis management;
- regulatory compliance;
- energy transition and renewable and alternative energy sources;
- employee benefits and executive compensation, including properly incentivizing ESG-related behaviors; and
- labor and employment.

Embracing ESG principles and implementing ESG-related programs is a unique process for every organization, tied directly to each organization's distinct cultural and brand identity. We work closely with clients to develop and

execute ESG-related initiatives that best fit their specific needs, including their overall business strategy and existing key performance indicators, to the benefit of all their stakeholders.

Mike Blankenship (co-chair) focuses on corporate finance, mergers and acquisitions, private equity, and securities law matters, and regularly counsels public companies on strategic transactions, capital markets offerings, and general corporate matters. He has advised numerous clients on many ESG matters, including ESG due diligence and developing and implementing long-term ESG strategies.

Eric Johnson (co-chair) has extensive experience representing private and public companies and investors, in a broad range of corporate and securities matters, including mergers and acquisitions and capital markets transactions. He regularly advises boards and management teams on ESG matters, including implementation of various ESG programs and ESG-related disclosures.

Jonathan Brightbill, a trial and appellate lawyer, served as Acting Assistant Attorney General for the Environment & Natural Resources Division of the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), the nation's lead environmental law enforcement official. He has litigated the highest-profile climate and environmental cases, as well as major consumer fraud, advertising, securities, and competition matters. Jon brings experience from the most senior levels of DOJ on white collar and regulatory enforcement and investigations, federal policymaking, and rulemaking development and challenges.

Eleni Koumelis focuses on environmental issues that arise in a variety of contexts, including transactions, compliance counseling, and litigation. She provides compliance counseling to diverse industrial and manufacturing clients in all the environmental media, including designing and implementing audit and sustainability programs, strategic planning, and permitting and siting approval.

Seth Farber, a former Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York, focuses his practice on white-collar criminal defense, corporate internal investigations, and related civil litigation. Many of his matters have involved investigations (often by multiple regulators across several jurisdictions) of U.S. multinational companies in the energy and renewable energy industries. Seth has tried numerous federal cases to juries and is an experienced appellate advocate who has argued both civil and criminal appeals in federal circuit courts around the country. He also handles SEC investigations, securities litigation, civil RICO litigation, and corporate governance litigation.

Cardelle Spangler focuses her practice on employment litigation and counseling matters across the full spectrum of issues, including EEO, ERISA, restrictive covenant, breach of contract, and diversity-related initiatives over her 20 years as an employment litigator and advisor. She has significant experience representing clients in the medical device, pharmaceutical, food service, financial service, and transportation industries.

Rex Sessions represents clients in employment discrimination, wrongful discharge, and ERISA litigation matters; advises clients on EEO practices and employment-at-will issues; and assists clients in developing human resource policies and employee handbooks. He is experienced in negotiations and litigation concerning executive employment agreements, non-competition provisions, and other contracts.

Peter Crowther has significant experience in all aspects of EU law. While his sector focus is broad, he has a particularly established track record of advising clients in the energy, technology, and financial services (including insurance) industries on a wide variety of issues. Amongst other advice to energy sector entities, he has advised on the application of secondary legislation in the sector and assisted with the preparation of and submissions to the EU authorities regarding the development of the EU energy legal framework. He has extensive experience in the international dimension of EU energy policy and energy treaties between the EU and third-world countries.

Key Contacts

Michael J. Blankenship

J. Eric Johnson

Jonathan D. Brightbill

[Eleni Kouimelis](#)

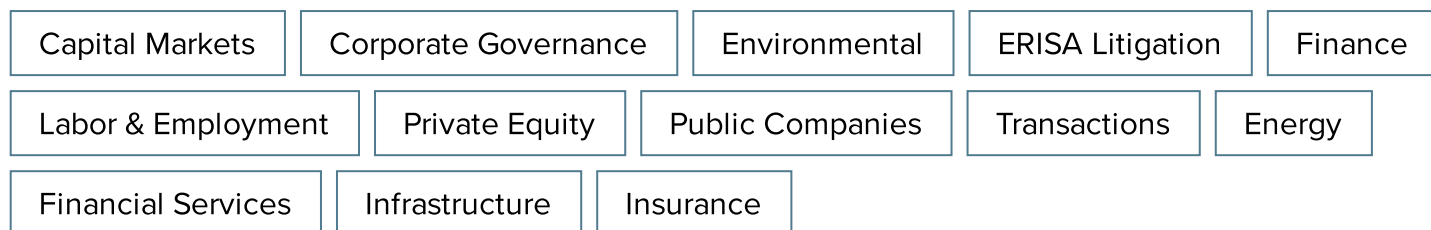
[Seth Farber](#)

[Cardelle Spangler](#)

[Rex Sessions](#)

[Peter Crowther](#)

Related Capabilities



Related Insights & News

SPONSORSHIP

Winston Sponsors 36th Annual ROTH Conference

MARCH 17, 2024

BLOG

SEC Adopts Final Climate-Related Disclosure Rules

MARCH 6, 2024

ARTICLE

Managing the Energy Transition: Oil & Gas Industry Response

MARCH 1, 2024

SPONSORSHIP

Winston & Strawn Sponsors 2023 Retail Law Conference

OCTOBER 25 – 27, 2023

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENT

Navigating ESG Landmines and Pitfalls: A Race to Compliance

SEPTEMBER 29, 2023

WEBINAR

What Financial Institutions Doing Business in Florida Need to Know about Florida's "Anti-ESG" Bill

MAY 9, 2023

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENT

Checking In: Environmental Social Governance (ESG) Today

MARCH 15, 2023

BLOG

House Financial Services Committee Scrutinizes Climate Disclosure Proposals

MARCH 1, 2023

SPONSORSHIP

Winston & Strawn Sponsors THRIVE Energy Conference 2023

FEB. 21-23, 2023

BLOG

Environmental Enforcement To Focus On Climate Change and PFAS

JANUARY 24, 2023

ARTICLE

Sustainable Finance: Navigating Multiple ESG Frameworks & Standards in International Bond Markets

JANUARY 18, 2023

BLOG

A “Durable” Definition? EPA Issues Final Rule Revising Definition of WOTUS

JANUARY 9, 2023