

Daily Journal

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TOP WOMEN LAWYERS

The Daily Journal's Annual List of Leading Women Lawyers in California

Shannon S. Broome

Broome's passion for environmental law — and drive to help businesses dealing with it — started underground.

Recalling her days as a chemical engineer tasked with removing old gasoline storage tanks from underneath service stations being converted into mini-marts, Broome said, "I just saw how much there was to do to help companies who want to do the right thing, to be proactive."

As a top environmental lawyer and partner in Hunton & Williams' San Francisco office, Broome litigates against regulations on behalf of companies.

"For me, the principle is defending the law," Broome said. "Every law has specific directives to the agencies, and agencies have to write regulations to accommodate those provisions. When I get frustrated is when regulations don't put a company on notice about what its responsibilities are."

In the past two years, Broome has negotiated with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency over that principle, representing trade organizations such as the Chemical Safety Advocacy Group, Aerospace Industries Association or Texas Oil and Gas Association.

She represented the Chemical Safety Advocacy Group in talks over the Obama administration's midnight overhaul of EPA's regulations on chemical security. She coordinated with the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Department of Homeland Security, so they would advocate the group's viewpoint as their own.

For the Aerospace Industries Association, which includes California members Lockheed

Martin and Northrup Grumman, Broome convinced the EPA that further controls on air toxins from the industry's coating operations were not needed. In issuing an update to Residual Risk and Technology Review rule, however, the EPA added a provision about managing the waste from coating operations. Broome filed a letter for reconsideration and a lawsuit with a member of the AIA as plaintiff. *Aero MACT Group v. EPA, et al.* No. 16-1040 (D.C. Cir., filed Feb. 5, 2016). The Obama Administration issued a clarifying guidance document on Dec. 1, 2016, and the suit is on its way to being formally resolved.

Broome is representing Texas Oil and Gas in litigation challenging EPA's regulations for fugitive methane emissions and defending an alternate compliance provision for the industry. *Texas Oil and Gas Association v. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency*, No. 16-1269 (D.C. Cir., filed Aug. 2, 2016). On April 18, 2017, new EPA Administrator E. Scott Pruitt informed Broome by letter that the agency was staying compliance of the methane rule for 90 days to take public comment on reconsidering it.

The same expertise and drive also works at the level of crafting and obtaining an environmental permit for a plant, as she has done for Chevron refineries in California and Hawaii and for its Richmond Technology Center. "I get the motivation from the fact I really make a difference," she said.

Broome also has been working behind the scenes in incident response and crisis management — for instance, when a refinery's



HUNTON & WILLIAMS LLP
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Practice Type: Litigation

unexpected release travels off-site. One of the reasons she joined Hunton & Williams a year ago, she said, is its multidisciplinary practice in responding to a crisis.

"I love environmental law, and I love working with young, energetic attorneys in my office," she said. "If I'm doing well, it's because they're all doing a great job. I look for opportunities to let them shine."

— James Getz