

Professional Services

TO BE HEADED BY THREE FIRM PARTNERS: VILLANI, WARD AND BRAFF

Sahn Ward Coschignano, PLLC launches environmental, energy and resources practice group

UNIONDALE, NY Sahn Ward Coschignano, PLLC has formed a environmental, energy, and resources practice



Miriam Villani



Jon Ward



Daniel Braff



Joseph Bjarnson

group, which will be supported by the firm's zoning and land use, and litigation practices. The group will be spearheaded by three of the firm's partners, Miriam Villani, Jon Ward, and Daniel Braff — who, respectively, have extensive experience in environmental, litigation, and land use matters — and associate Joseph Bjarnson, who concentrates his practice in environmental, land use and zoning, litigation, and appeals.

This group has been formed in recognition of the growing sustainability trend, which gives rise to policy decisions and regulatory developments dictating how energy needs will be met now and for years to come. The growth of sustainability — the utilization of energy resources to meet the world's expanding needs without

environmental detriment — can be attributed to global investments in solar, wind, and hydropower energy

technologies.

According to the Institute for Energy Research (IER), the U.S. was the number one consumer of renewable energy consumption, producing 22% of the world's total, with hydropower being the most-produced source. The IER predicts an increase in the usage of renewable energy through 2040. To keep up with current demand, utility companies like Long Island PSEG have contributed to a worldwide surge in green energy investments that will continue to grow as markets mature, technology prices continue to fall, and the growing urgency to reduce carbon emissions increases.

Sahn Ward Coschignano's new environment, energy, and resources group represents and advises clients in all areas of environmental law at

the federal, state, and local levels. The group represents individual, industrial, commercial, health care, and municipal clients in a full spectrum of environmental law matters, including air quality, development and siting, SEQRA compliance, permitting, hazardous waste, brownfields, and wetlands, among many others.

Villani's practice concentrates on all aspects of environmental law in both federal and state courts and before administrative agencies. She began her legal career as an assistant regional counsel for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Before joining the firm, she was counsel with environmental law practice groups at two prominent Long Island law firms, and was special environmental counsel to a large international pharmaceutical company, where she managed complex environmental insurance litigation. Villani has served as chair of the New York State Bar Association's Environmental Law Section and is currently editor-in-chief of *The New York Environmental Lawyer*, a journal published by the New York State Bar Association. Her extensive experience and her knowledge

of environmental law includes the New York State Environmental Conservation Law, the New York State Navigation Law, the wetlands acts, RCRA, TSCA, and CERCLA.

"The environmental issues of today have a significant impact on businesses and organizations as they affect investment decisions, stakeholder interactions, and government regulations," Villani said. "These issues present challenges to business owners, entrepreneurs, and municipalities who may not understand the intricacies of environmental law."

Ward represents the firm's clients in a variety of complex civil litigation matters in state and federal trial and appellate courts, with an emphasis on commercial, real property, construction, environmental, municipal, and land use litigation, including civil rights claims arising from land use proceedings.

"It is important for developers to understand the impact their projects may have on the environment," Ward said. "Our group can assist developers in following environmental regulations and preventing them from facing any litigation that may cost them time

and money to complete their project."

Braff concentrates his practice in zoning and land use planning, real estate, environmental, and corporate law, with a particular emphasis on regulations governing the use and development of real property within New York City. He provides zoning analyses, counsels clients in connection with development rights transfers (a/k/a "air rights" transfers), advises on environmental matters, and represents clients before various city agencies. He has also counseled clients in connection with public utility projects in the tri-state area and has secured special permits from the board of standards and appeals and the city planning commission for numerous telecommunication facilities in New York City.

"Any new energy project in the City of New York that requires discretionary approval will be subject to City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) regulations," Braff said. "I look forward to working with the Firm's business and public utility clients to ensure that our region's energy needs are being met in an environmentally friendly manner."