



Senior Counsel
Sylvia Harrison

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Areas of Practice

Energy, Environment &
Natural Resources Law

Bar Admissions

Nevada

Court Admissions

U.S. District Court, District of
Nevada

U.S. Court of Appeals, Ninth
Circuit

Education

J.D., University of Montana

Ph.D., Geology, University of
Montana

M.S., Earth Sciences, Montana
State University

B.S., Montana State University

Offices

LAS VEGAS

2300 West Sahara Avenue, Suite 1200
Las Vegas, NV 89102
P: 702.873.4100 F: 702.873.9966

RENO

100 West Liberty Street, Tenth Floor
Reno, NV 89501
P: 775.788.2000 F: 775.788.2020

mcdonaldcarano.com

Professional Background

Ms. Harrison joined the law firm in 1990 after graduating first in her law school class at the University of Montana. She became a partner in 1994. Ms. Harrison practices primarily in environmental, energy, and natural resources law, a natural evolution from her former career as a geologist. In the Chambers USA ranking of leading lawyers in Nevada Environmental Law, client references highlight that Ms. Harrison is a “good operator whom we hold in very high regard. “We have engaged her on an array of environmental matters and have found her to be extremely knowledgeable and efficient.” “She is a very high-caliber, top-notch lawyer, especially on water rights and permitting issues as well as public utility work.”

She earned her Ph.D. in geology in 1985 and was published widely in that area, but decided to pursue a legal career to further her commitment to integrating scientific knowledge with public interest. Ms. Harrison serves as Chair of the firm’s Energy, Environment & Natural Resources Law Practice.

Environmental & Natural Resources Law

Ms. Harrison regularly assists clients with environmental compliance and permitting matters, environmental due diligence, water law, mining and mineral development, public land law, NEPA compliance, and mine reclamation. She has experience in complex environmental litigation, including the defense of CERCLA and RCRA citizen suits, the representation of clients in state and federal enforcement actions, and the negotiation and drafting of federal and state consent decrees.

Energy

Complementing her environmental and natural resources practice, Ms. Harrison also works extensively in energy law, including geothermal leasing, due diligence for complex project financing, negotiation and drafting of power purchase agreements and related documents, facility siting, permitting, and public land law.

Ms. Harrison, together with other attorneys in the firm, recently served as local counsel in connection with the financing and evaluation of the potential acquisition of significant energy projects. Her primary responsibility was the review of environmental compliance, permitting, and property positions. This work included intensive due diligence and the review, negotiation, and preparation of legal opinions for both lenders and developers. Specific projects include refinancing for expansion of a large geothermal facility, project financing for a major transmission line, a 150-megawatt wind farm, a 100-megawatt concentrating solar power plant, PV solar projects, and a 20-megawatt biomass project. She has also represented potential investors in compliance and permitting reviews in evaluation of the possible acquisitions of a major gold mine and commercial-scale renewable energy projects.

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Commercial Transactions

Ms. Harrison assists clients in complex commercial transactions, including environmental due diligence, acquisition of water rights, and compliance reviews. She has represented clients in bankruptcy cases, particularly in relation to mining and energy projects and environmental claims.



Publications

- *Geothermal Resources in The Law of Clean Energy: Efficiency and Renewables*, Michael B. Gerrard editor, American Bar Association, 2011.
- *Disposition of the Mineral Estate on United States Public Lands: A Historical Perspective*, 10 Public Land Law Review 131.
- *Environmental Due Diligence in Real Property Transactions: Practice Pointers*, Nevada Lawyer, Vol. 5, No. 1, January 1997.
- *The Historical Development of Nevada Water Law*, 5 University of Denver Water Law Review, 148.
- *Effective Use of Phase I Environmental Assessments*, Nevada Lawyer, Vol. 16, No. 9, September 2008.
- *Geothermal Resources, Who Owns What?*, Nevada Lawyer, Vol. 17, No. 7, July 2009



Awards and Recognition

- *Chambers USA Guide* – Environmental Law
- *The Best Lawyers of America*® “Lawyer of the Year” – Energy Law (2021)
- *The Best Lawyers of America*® “Lawyer of the Year” – Environmental Law, Energy Law (2021)
- Martindale-Hubbell AV® Peer Review Rated



Community Engagement

- Rocky Mountain Mineral Law Foundation
- Geothermal Resources Council
- Board of Trustees, Executive Committee, and Chair of Education Committee, Reno Philharmonic Association

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