

**NEW YORK STATE BAR ASSOCIATION
ENVIRONMENTAL AND ENERGY LAW SECTION**

**Commitment to Diversity
May 2017**

**Committee on Diversity
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Introduction

The Environmental and Energy Law Section is committed to having a diverse membership so that those who participate in the Section's activities and the products of the Section's work will be enriched and enhanced by the different perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences of its members.

Data on Section membership indicate that the Section lacks diversity in many respects. As a result, the Section is committed to increasing the heterogeneity of the Section membership from among the many diverse individuals in the environmental legal profession.

Section's Mission Statement

The purpose of this Section shall be to bring together such members of the New York State Bar Association as are interested in environmental, land use, energy, health and safety and related issues and topics, to further the education of the legal community, the public and governmental and elected officials on legal, administrative and policy matters relating to such issues, including by increasing the diversity of Section membership, to facilitate the making of public policy, and to provide networking opportunities between and among attorneys in private practice, government, the not-for-profit sector, corporations and consulting firms.

Committee on Diversity

The Section established the Committee on Diversity first as an ad hoc committee in 2003. The committee later became a standing committee – the Committee on Diversity – in 2015. The Committee drafted a Diversity Plan in 2004 – which, in reality, was more of a statement of principles than a plan of action - and updated it in 2011. Rather than update the Diversity Plan again, this document memorializes and represents the Section's commitment to diversity. To follow up on this commitment, the Committee will propose various targeted actions each year.

Goals

The goals of the Section relating to diversity are to actively recruit attorneys from diverse backgrounds and practice areas to join, and become active members of, the Section, to serve on Section committees and to participate in programs to foster an atmosphere of inclusion of these attorneys and to benefit from their perspectives. To this end, the Section seeks a varied membership based on a number of characteristics and factors:

- race
- ethnicity
- gender
- gender identity
- sexual orientation
- age and experience level
- disability
- public sector employment
- not-for-profit sector employment
- private practice
- corporate counsel employment
- geography
- position within a firm or organization
- practice area within environmental law

Tools

To achieve the goals identified above, the Committee has identified a number of tools.

Section Message on Diversity

- Amend the Section Mission Statement to include a commitment to diversity, as set forth above.
- Ensure that the Section Committees performing nominating functions are informed of the Section's goals for diversity.
- Provide a copy of this document and the Section's Speaker Selection Guidelines (see attachment A) to all existing and incoming Committee and Program Chairs.

Outreach Efforts

- Conduct outreach to law schools, including Environmental Law Societies, especially through the efforts of Section members who are alumni of a law school.
- Conduct outreach to local and specialty bar associations (e.g., Black, Hispanic, Asian, and Women's Bar Associations).
- Review NYSBA corporate counsel list to identify potential Section members.
- Work with General Counsels and other active Section members from government agencies to attract more members.
- Work with senior attorneys in law firms to encourage participation by younger and more newly admitted attorneys.
- Use Section leaders from underrepresented areas of the State to seek greater participation from attorneys in those areas, including asking Section leaders to speak at County Bar Association meetings.
- Work with Section members who are active in other NYSBA sections to encourage cross-over membership.

The Personal Touch

- Ensure that first-time registrants feel welcome even prior to a meeting.
- Establish an Ambassador program to greet new members to Section meetings.
- Continue outreach between meetings so as to encourage continued membership and participation.
- Invite new members to the Executive Committee Reception at each Annual Meeting.

Speakers at CLE Programs and Other Section Events

- Work with CLE Committee and Program Chairs to encourage selection of speakers with diverse backgrounds and experiences.
- Review proposed rosters of speakers at and panelists for Section programs to oversee diversity participation.

Publicity for Efforts to Obtain Diversity

- Publicize the Section's efforts at increasing diversity in publications of the Section and NYSBA.
- Publicize the Section's efforts at increasing diversity among targets of the Committee's outreach efforts, including law schools, local and specialty bar associations, etc.

Adopted by the Executive Committee of the NYSBA Environmental and Energy Law Section on May 3, 2017.