



2019 RISING STAR

Jonathan Kidwell

Kirkland & Ellis LLP's Jonathan Kidwell has been responsible over the past year for handling the environmental side of large deals, such as private equity firm GTCR LLC's acquisition of defense and aerospace battery manufacturer EaglePicher Technologies LLC, earning him a spot as one of five environmental law practitioners under age 40 honored by *Law360* as Rising Stars.

The biggest cases of his career:

Kidwell said his work primarily consists of navigating two different types of deals: those with high dollar value and those where understanding and managing environmental risks are a key component. And he said sometimes both of those elements show up in the same deal, such as the GTCR-EaglePicher deal and Macquarie Infrastructure Partners' acquisition of waste-to-energy company Wheelabrator Technologies Inc.

"These were significant deals that required the full extent of my skills as an environmental attorney in terms of dealing with corporate history, identifying complex environmental risks, devising unique strategies for

managing those risks and managing and working with large teams of attorneys, consultants, insurance brokers and jurisdiction-specific counsel," Kidwell said.

He said the deals required him to understand environmental risks in different jurisdictions, learn how operations in a given jurisdiction are subject to different requirements and assess whether there were global solutions to handle those risks.

What motivates him:

Kidwell said he doesn't see environmental issues as posing problems to getting deals done — just opportunities to find solutions for what comes up.

"I'm motivated by building relationships with clients, fellow attorneys and other environmental professionals like consultants and insurance brokers," he said. "Then figuring out what's most important

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to the client in a given matter, identifying risks that others might miss and getting the deal done anyway.”

He said the biggest benefits of building relationships at the client level is gaining a better understanding of what matters to the client and what the client’s real objectives are.

Why he’s an environmental attorney:

Kidwell said he works in transactions because he likes the fast pace of the deals, and in the environmental space because of the variety.

“Environmental law is a very broad subject matter with different areas of emphasis for different industries and different clients,” he said. “So my practice is going through a constant evolution as industries change and social attitudes change and regulatory frameworks change.”

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How his practice area will change in the next 10 years:

There is likely to be an increase in international cooperation on the environmental regulatory front in the coming years, Kidwell said.

“I think industrial businesses will continue to be more and more global, leading to increased cross-border transactions, and environmental work in a transactional context will focus more and more on what I would call looking-forward risks, rather than looking-backward risks,” he said.

As industrial businesses have operations that spread out

worldwide, there will be more and more cross-border transactions, which means environmental deals attorneys will need to have the ability to spot risks in different jurisdictions around the world and understand how different industries look in those various jurisdictions.

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