

Rising Star: Latham's Devin O'Connor

By **Sam Reisman**

Law360 (August 24, 2026, 4:00 PM EDT) -- Latham & Watkins LLP partner Devin M. O'Connor has worked on the teams that successfully secured multiple court victories within the past year that allowed multibillion-dollar offshore wind and energy projects to resume construction, earning her a spot among the environmental attorneys under 40 honored by Law360 as Rising Stars.

The victories that stand out:

O'Connor said her practice largely revolves around advising clients on "complex environmental and permitting requirements," helping those clients "obtain federal permits to develop energy and infrastructure projects," and then — in instances when those permits have been challenged in court — working to defend and preserve those approvals.

Regarding recent court victories that stand out, she pointed to a series of three preliminary injunction orders, from September to February, that the firm helped secure in a D.C. federal court. They allowed construction to resume for the Revolution Wind Project off the coast of Rhode Island and the Sunrise Wind Project off the coast of New York.

"These were critical decisions that allowed our clients to resume construction on these multibillion-dollar projects," she said.

In addition, she cited a March victory in three consolidated cases, each challenging federal approvals for the South Fork Wind Project, another offshore wind project that was being constructed off the coast of the Empire State.

"We ... won on summary judgment for environmental law and historic preservation law claims, showing the project's compliance," she said of the South Fork matters.



Devin O'Connor
Latham

Age: 39

Home base: Washington, D.C.

Position: Partner

Law school: Harvard Law School

First job after law school: Associate
at Latham

In that litigation, the Latham legal team also obtained dismissal of claims that the court found were time-barred under the "FAST-41 statute," a reference to Title 41 of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act, a law expediting the permitting of infrastructure projects.

"These were important decisions in the administrative law and environmental law spaces," O'Connor said.

Why she's an environmental lawyer:

O'Connor said her interest in the field of environmental law and administrative law began in law school and only deepened in the years since she launched her professional practice.

"I was drawn to the complexity, the constant regulatory change and the opportunity to advise clients in those areas, and that's continued to be something I find really rewarding today," she said.

O'Connor said she remains motivated by the chance "to help clients navigate those uncertainties in a really practical way, to provide real-world solutions to meet the moment and where we are."

On how the practice will change:

O'Connor said it remains a "really interesting time" to work as an environmental lawyer, pointing to both "the fast-paced nature of the regulatory work" and the near-constant stream of "new developments" that present both challenges and opportunities to hone her practice.

"These projects are being developed in an environmental regulatory space that's continuing to evolve over time and faces a lot of changes and a lot of uncertainty on both the environmental front and the administrative law front," she said.

"So I think those changes will continue to evolve, and there'll be both opportunities and challenges to help our clients navigate that uncertainty and be able to accomplish their business goals," she added.

Her advice to younger attorneys:

Reflecting on her career at Latham, O'Connor noted that she had been acknowledged for her mentorship work with younger colleagues — a full-circle moment given that she started her career at the firm and something she describes as "core to my practice as an attorney."

"This is a really important area because ... I started at Latham as a brand-new associate. I've been the beneficiary of a lot of investment and time and great mentorship over the years," she said. "I know how critical it is to attorney development, and so to me, it's a priority to keep investing and helping associates navigate their career and how they want to grow and develop."

Asked what advice she would give to younger attorneys, O'Connor said they should "learn the administrative law aspects as well as the environmental law and regulations in a wide variety of areas," a prerequisite to diving into their professional practice and hopefully becoming a "subject-matter expert."

--As told to Sam Reisman. Editing by Rich Mills.

Law360's Rising Stars are attorneys under 40 whose legal accomplishments belie their age. A team of Law360 editors selected the 2026 Rising Stars winners after reviewing more than 1,100 submissions. Attorneys had to be under 40 as of April 30, 2026, to be eligible for this year's award.

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