

Rising Star: Latham & Watkins' Jennifer Roy

By Mike LaSusa

Law360 (June 3, 2022, 2:02 PM EDT) -- Latham & Watkins LLP partner Jennifer Roy has carved out a practice guiding major utilities, energy companies and others on environmental policy and regulatory compliance, earning her a spot on this year's list of environmental practitioners under age 40 honored by Law360 Rising Stars.

CASES SHE'S CURRENTLY WORKING ON:

Roy has taken on a full portfolio of work since her return to Latham last year after a stint as in-house counsel at a natural gas company.

She's currently advising Southern California Gas Company on its plans for a hydrogen pipeline in the Los Angeles area, and representing water infrastructure developer Poseidon Resources in seeking environmental approvals for a desalination facility in Huntington Beach, California. Additionally, she helped San Diego Gas & Electric secure approvals for a project to reduce the risk of wildfires.

Roy said she values the opportunity to help advance projects that will have an impact close to home.

"It's really fun and rewarding to work on projects that are designed to improve the energy system and its reliability and its safety right in my own backyard," she said.

HER PROUDEST MOMENT:

While Roy has scored her share of wins in the environmental law arena, her proudest moment as an attorney came in an immigration case.

Roy said she got an opportunity to take a pro bono asylum case as a young lawyer in part because she was located in San Diego, near the U.S.-Mexico border.

She said it was a seminal experience for her, as it was one of the first times she had command of the floor in an active courtroom.

2022



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**RISING
STAR**



Jennifer Roy

Latham & Watkins

Age: 36

Home base: San Diego

Position: Partner

Law school: University of Virginia School of Law

First job after law school:
Associate at Latham & Watkins LLP

"It was the first time I felt like a real lawyer," she said. "I was standing in front of a judge, and I was standing in front of a room full of people and I had this responsibility to advocate for a client who was facing a tremendously difficult scenario."

WHAT MOTIVATES HER:

Roy said she's always been "fascinated" by nature, having grown up in rural parts of Massachusetts and Virginia. But an environmental law class in college gave her the spark to pursue a career in that field.

"I would call that the 'aha' moment," she said. "I always knew I wanted to work on something involving the environment, but I didn't know quite what."

The challenge of mastering a huge body of technical and legal knowledge keeps the job interesting, Roy said.

"Whether it's reading a new case, or being exposed to some new technical concept, or working with a subject matter expert, there's never a day or week that goes by where I don't walk away learning something new," she said.

ON HOW THE INDUSTRY IS CHANGING:

As the world grapples with the implications of global climate change, Roy said she expects the public, policymakers and corporations to take a greater interest in environmental law.

She predicts the added emphasis on environmental issues means clients will increasingly seek advice on topics they may not have previously considered, like how to deal with rising sea levels or extended droughts.

"I'm seeing this more and more in insurance and corporate finance and board advising — areas that traditionally wouldn't have been considered environmental practice areas," she said.

— *As told to Mike LaSusa*

Law360's Rising Stars are attorneys under 40 whose legal accomplishments belie their age. A team of Law360 editors selected the 2022 Rising Stars winners after reviewing more than 1,350 submissions. Attorneys had to be under 40 as of April 30, 2022, to be eligible for this year's award. This interview has been edited and condensed.