

Crowell & Moring Hires K&L Gates Atty With FERC Experience

By Jack Rodgers

Law360 (January 18, 2024, 7:02 AM EST) -- Crowell & Moring LLP said Thursday it hired a K&L Gates LLP partner who focuses her practice on electric and natural gas matters to join the firm's environment, energy and natural resources practice group in Washington, D.C.

Ruta Kalvaitis Skučas has joined Crowell & Moring as a partner, bringing with her more than two decades of experience advising clean energy developers and traders on compliance and enforcement issues, the firm said.

She largely represents energy trading companies and clean energy developers before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, the U.S. Department of Energy and state public utility commissions, according to the firm. Some of her work involves wholesale electricity markets and advising clients on a range of issues that market participants face.

Her clients include merchant transmission developers, nontraditional energy and technology companies, and emerging ventures. She helps renewable and natural gas clients with project development matters such as interconnection, capacity market, and mergers and acquisitions, the firm said.

In an interview with Law360 Pulse, Skučas said she thoroughly enjoyed her time at K&L Gates and that she loved her colleagues and practice at the firm, describing her departure as "bittersweet."

"But Crowell offered a unique opportunity to really step into a role with a practice group that's growing and has a strategic vision to have it move forward," Skučas said. "The group has a very strong goal to change and grow, and expand, and I'm really excited to be a part of that."

Skučas got her interest in working on energy matters when she was at FERC, after she was recruited by former Administrative Law Judge Ed Silverstein, she said, who also is a Boston University School of Law alumni.

"He came recruiting to my law school and said, 'Come clerk at FERC. If you do two years and you love it, then you have a natural pathway into working on energy issues. But if you hate it, you just tell people you clerked for a judge, you forget the energy part and move on,'" Skučas said.

After earning her law degree from Boston University School of Law, Skučas spent two years clerking at FERC for two administrative law judges, according to her LinkedIn profile. Of her time clerking, she said



Ruta Kalvaitis Skučas

she "absolutely loved it. I've never looked back."

She then spent eight years at White & Case LLP as an associate with the firm's energy, infrastructure and project finance group, she said.

Skučas then returned to FERC, working as an attorney adviser and later as an attorney in the commission's Office of the General Counsel. She also worked as a legal adviser to Commissioner Cheryl LaFleur, advising on matters including the Pennsylvania-New Jersey-Maryland Interconnection and the Midcontinent Independent System Operator.

Skučas also helped FERC shape electric and natural gas policy, including on transmission planning, the firm said.

For Skučas, the evolving and ever-changing nature of her work — whether it be shifting regulations or compliance issues — is what she enjoys the most about her practice, she said.

"I've been practicing for 25 years, so what I did back then and what I do today is ... very, very, very different," she said. "The industry has changed, the types of companies engaging with FERC have changed, but it's always been interesting and dynamic."

Tyler O'Connor, one of Crowell & Moring's energy practice leaders, said in a statement that Skučas' "combination of federal regulatory and private practice experience" will be invaluable to the firm's clients.

"She has a deep understanding of federal regulation of the electric and natural gas industries, from the project finance, regulatory compliance, and enforcement perspectives," he said in a statement.

In addition to Skučas, Crowell & Moring recently hired a new chief financial officer from DLA Piper, Mark Fenoughty, who joined the firm last week.

--Additional reporting by Andrea Keckley. Editing by Lakshna Mehta.