

Crowell & Moring Lands Ex-EPA Enviro, Gov't Affairs Pro

By Adam Lidgett

Law360 (August 22, 2018, 2:08 PM EDT) -- Crowell & Moring LLP will bolster its environmental and governmental affairs practices at the end of August by adding the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's former deputy chief of staff to the firm's ranks in the nation's capital.

The firm announced this month that Byron R. Brown will soon join the firm as senior counsel, splitting his time between its government affairs practice group and its environment and natural resources group.

Brown told Law360 he had returned to the EPA at the beginning of the Trump administration, after having worked on Capitol Hill for a while, to help with the transition process and some specific projects, such as implementing legislation he had helped draft as a Senate staffer: a provision of the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act. And now it's time to take on the next challenge, he said.

"The agency has now a number of Senate-confirmed appointees in place, and EPA has taken significant steps toward implementing that new legislative authority, so I felt like it was a good time to try something new," he said.

Brown has experience advising on a range of issues in rulemaking, and he said he's seen the life cycle of policy, from passage by Congress to implementation by agency rulemaking or guidance, and then to back-end work when an agency gets challenged in court. He said he would provide strategic counseling on those issues to clients in the environment and natural resources space.

"I started working at EPA as an information law attorney working on Freedom of Information Act issues, and the exciting part about that work is that you parachute into whatever the hot topic of the day was and you had to learn about the underlying issue and EPA programs, and so I really enjoyed working at EPA because it was a high-profile agency that was very busy," he said. "It was always in the news, the rulemaking issues are very complicated and very consequential, and so I just enjoyed that dynamic practice area that EPA provided."

Brown said he started as the EPA's deputy chief of staff for policy in March 2017, and before that he was senior counsel for the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, where he worked for a little more than two years. He said he had also for a time served as senior counsel and director for oversight and investigations for the House Committee on Natural Resources.

Prior to that he worked at the EPA between January 2001 and December 2011 in its office of general counsel, serving in a variety of roles from staff attorney to associate deputy general counsel, he said.

“Byron was an early member of the current administration’s senior policy team and helped craft EPA’s agenda,” the firm’s environment and natural resources group chair Elliott P. Laws said in a statement. “He was the senior appointee involved in developing EPA’s reorganization and reform plans, helped prepare other appointees for their Senate confirmation hearings, and was a key member of the policy team formulating EPA’s budget request and strategic plan.”

--Editing by Adam LoBelia.