



William J. Nelson

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Madison

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Practice Areas

Administrative & Regulatory

Environmental

Tribal Governments

Admissions

Wisconsin

Education

Juris Doctor, Marquette
University Law School

Bachelor of Arts, University
of Wisconsin – Madison

Bill Nelson is a highly skilled environmental attorney with deep expertise in navigating complex regulatory landscapes and advising clients across the full spectrum of environmental issues. From transactional matters involving site remediation and permitting, to supporting clients in high-stakes litigation, Bill delivers comprehensive legal counsel to commercial, industrial, municipal, and tribal clients. His regulatory and technical knowledge, particularly in areas involving per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and experience in disputes with state and federal agencies, makes him a valuable asset to any project facing environmental risk.

Bill regularly works with clients on a wide range of environmental matters, including site remediation, wastewater and air permitting, enforcement defense, water quality trading, and Brownfields redevelopment. He helps clients navigate regulatory frameworks, resolve disputes with environmental agencies—such as the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)—and move forward with development or cleanup projects.

While Bill's practice is primarily focused helping clients proactively manage risk, he is frequently brought in when environmental and administrative issues lead to litigation. His regulatory and technical insight makes him an invaluable partner when clients are involved in disputes with state or federal agencies.

A significant portion of Bill's work focuses on PFAS-related regulation and strategy. He was directly involved in the development of Wisconsin's PFAS framework and now advises clients on compliance, remediation obligations, and navigating agency policy surrounding emerging contaminants. His unique background in this area provides clients with a strategic advantage as they manage these complex and evolving issues.

Before joining Godfrey & Kahn, Bill served as legal counsel to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, primarily supporting the Remediation and Redevelopment Program and Real Estate Program. His work involved contaminated sediment cleanups, Brownfields redevelopment, and land management issues. This experience provides Bill with a rare perspective on administrative and regulatory matters, especially when working with state agencies.

Honors

Recognized by *Chambers USA* (Natural Resources & Environment, 2024)

Activities

Aldo Leopold Nature Center – Board Member (2023 – Present); Current Board Chair American Bar Association (ABA), Section of Environment, Energy & Natural Resources (SEER) – Member, (2022 – Present)

Activities (continued)

Harbor District, Inc., Eco Breakwater Project – Advisory Subcommittee Member (2023 – Present)

Milwaukee Bar Association, Environmental Law Section – Member (2023 – Present)

State Bar of Wisconsin, Environmental Law Section – Board of Directors (Elected Term 2024 – 2027); Member (2017 – Present)

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Remediation and Redevelopment Program External Advisory Group, NR 700 Subgroup – Chair (2022 – Present)

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Air Management Study Group – Alternate Member (2024 – Present)