

# Energy Law



## What is Energy Law?

Energy law is the collection of national, state, and local regulations concerned with the extraction, production, taxation, and use of energy resources. Energy law also includes some international agreements. Energy law impacts energy production companies (including renewable, nonrenewable, and nuclear energy companies), utility companies, and consumers. Energy law necessarily intersects foreign policy agreements regarding oil supply and climate change policies. Energy law also intersects national security concerns because of the military implications of nuclear energy production ([Heffron](#)).

Major energy regulation in the United States began in the 1940s during the Manhattan Project, which produced the first nuclear weapons and the ensuing [Atomic Energy Act of 1946](#). Later acts include the [National Environmental Policy Act](#), enacted in 1970, which regulates the greenhouse gas emissions of federal construction projects ([Bandza et al](#)). Additional energy regulations were passed after the 1970s oil crisis. The Department of Energy was established in 1977 to regulate the economic aspects of the energy industry (including taxing gasoline and negotiating oil prices), to regulate the environmental impacts of energy production and consumption, and to monitor and manage security threats related to energy production ([DOE](#)). Further regulations were passed in 1978 as the [National Energy Act](#), which included the [Public Utility Regulatory Act](#), and the [Energy Tax Act](#). Many states have supplemental energy regulations.

Energy lawyers advise energy companies regarding legal restrictions and regulations. Energy lawyers also advise companies on policies that promote environmentalism or conserving energy. Many energy lawyers work for the Department of Energy, or other regulatory agencies ([Bandza et al](#)). Energy lawyers also represent the interests of energy consumers against utility companies and local governments, as utility consumer advocates ([Katz and Schneider](#)).

## Where Do Energy Lawyers Work?

### Government

Department of Energy—[Careers](#)

Department of Energy [Field Offices, including the Oak Ridge, Tennessee Office](#)

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission—[one of the best places to work in the federal government](#)

[National Association for Regulatory Utility Commissions](#)

Tennessee Public Utility Commission—[Employment Opportunities](#)

### Private Sector

Firms with energy law departments or that handle energy law cases

In-house counsel to energy or utility companies

# Energy Law Resources



## Resume Boosters for Energy Law

Consider pursuing a [Master of Laws \(LLM\) degree in Energy Law](#)

Join the International Law Society if you are interested in international energy policies

Participate in the Neighborhood Preservation Clinic if you are interested in working as a consumer advocate

Intern or extern with a firm or company that handles energy law cases

## What Classes Should I Take?

Administrative Law

Consumer Law

Environmental Law

Land Use Law

National Security Law

Public International Law Seminar

## Professional Associations

### American Bar Association

All University of Memphis law students have free membership to the [American Bar Association](#). Their website provides routinely updated information and interest-specific career advice. Join different sections to find out what they offer. Check out the [Environment, Energy, and Resources Section](#).

### Energy Bar Association

The [Energy Bar Association](#) provides education resources, career resources, and networking opportunities for those who practice energy law. Students may join for a [reduced rate](#) while in school.

## Energy Law Links

### [“State Energy Policy Implications for Tribal Energy Developments”](#)

This article by Pilar Thomas examines how state energy policies neglect the rights and desires of Native American nations within their borders. American Bar Association, August 31, 2020.

### [“Career Transitions: Tips From Those Who’ve Been There”](#)

This article by Jennifer Wills outlines a tips regarding navigating a career change with the energy and environmental law fields. American Bar Association, August 31, 2020.