



Charles F. Helsten

Partner
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Charles Helsten has a substantial environmental law practice. He counsels business entities of all sizes on environmental regulation, helping them audit their compliance, and consulting with them on environmental policy in their ongoing operations.

He also represents business clients in contested environmental matters, defending their interests in government compliance and enforcement actions, helping them secure necessary permits and approvals, and handling private contractual disputes over such issues as environmental indemnity/hold harmless clauses.

Mr. Helsten has appeared on behalf of clients before numerous federal, state and local regulatory agencies, tribunals and courts. He has also served as Defendant's Group liaison counsel and as Steering Committee Chairman at various Superfund sites.

Professional Background

Mr. Helsten joined Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP in January 1985. He is the Leader of the firm's Environmental Practice Group, and was a member of the firm's Executive Committee from 2006 to 2009.

He served on Illinois Governor Edgar's first Environmental Task Force. As part of his work with that group, he formulated the Illinois Environmental Amnesty ["Clean Break"] Program.

Mr. Helsten has also served as an Editorial Advisory Board member of the Illinois Environmental Law and Regulation Report.

He is a member of the Toxic Torts and Environmental Law National Committee of the Defense Research Institute. In addition, Mr. Helsten serves on four national subcommittees of the American Bar Association Section of Environment, Energy and Natural Resources.

Honors & Awards

- Selected by his peers for inclusion in *The Best Lawyers in America*® for Environmental Law, 2024

Practices

Environmental
Sustainability & ESG

Education

J.D., with distinction, Drake University Law School, 1979
B.A., *summa cum laude*, Eureka College, 1974, History and English

Admissions

Illinois
U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit
U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit
U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois
U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Iowa
U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Iowa
U.S. Tax Court



- Recognized by his peers as a Leading Lawyer in the categories Governmental, Municipal, Lobbying & Administrative Law, and Environmental Law
- Martindale-Hubbell rated for ethics and legal ability
- Included in *Leading Lawyers Magazine Real Estate, Construction & Environmental Edition's* list of Top Ten Downstate Real Estate-Related Lawyers, 2009 – 2010
- Included in *Leading Lawyers Magazine Business Edition* as one of the Top 100 Leading Downstate Business Lawyers in Illinois, 2010
- Recognized as a "Super Lawyer" by *Illinois Super Lawyers* magazine, 2005

Presentations

A frequent speaker on environmental law topics, Mr. Helsten regularly appears before professional associations, client groups and firm seminars. His presentations include:

- "Navigating the Implications of the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) Modernization Bill of 2015: How Prepared Are You?," webcast, The Knowledge Group, January 2016.
- "Are You in Compliance with Environmental Laws?" Life Services Network, 2007 Annual Convention & Exposition, Chicago, Illinois, March 2007.
- "Environmental Law Update," Hinshaw's 2005 Breakfast Seminar Series, Rockford, Illinois, April 2005.
- "Practical Aspects of Brownfields Transactions: How to Get the Job Done," U.S. EPA Region V Brownfields Conference, Racine, Wisconsin, June 1996.
- "The Environmental Winds of Change," National League of Municipalities Annual Meeting, Chicago, Illinois, October 1995.
- "Practical Aspects of Consent Decrees and Participation Agreements," Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP's Third Annual Insurer Symposium, Chicago, Illinois, November 1991.
- "Derivative CERCLA Liability," National Environmental Claim Managers Association Annual Meeting, Nashville, Tennessee, November 1991.
- "Environmental Law: Defense of Hazardous Waste Claims, Property Damage, Personal Injury—A New Look at the Reasonable and Adequate Defense," Hinshaw's Missouri/Illinois Insurer Symposium, September 1991.
- "Nature and Extent of Environmental Liability: Legal Issues," Hinshaw's Environmental Seminar, "The Nature and Extent of Environmental Liability: What Every Corporation Should Know," Peoria, Illinois, March 1991.
- Safety Exposition and Seminar, American Society of Safety Engineers, March 1991.
- "Enforcement and Compliance Ramifications of Clean Air Act Amendments," Environmental Technology Expo, Chicago, Illinois.

Publications

Mr. Helsten has also written a variety of environmental law treatises, articles and materials. Examples of his work include:

- "The Effect of *Aviall* on the Vitality of Brownfields Programs," co-author, "ABA Section on Environment, Energy and Resources Newsletter," March 2005.
- "Illinois' Underground Storage Tank Program: Past, Present and Future," *Illinois Environmental Law and Regulation Report*, 22 January 1996.
- "Practical Aspects of Consent Decrees and Participation Agreements," Materials for Hinshaw's Third Annual Insurer Symposium, November 1991.
- "A CERCLA Overview," Materials for Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP's Environmental Seminar, "The Nature and Extent of Environmental Liability: What Every Corporation Should Know," Peoria, Illinois, March 1991.
- "Individual Liability for Corporate Environmental Violations: An Unpleasant Consequence of Obtaining Corporate Control," *DePaul Business Law Journal*, Fall 1989.



- Interview, "Liability of Corporate Officers, Directors and Managers," *Environmental Law in The '90s*.