

Sonja Smerud

Associate

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Sonja is an associate in Dorsey's Regulatory Affairs Group, where she partners with clients to navigate the complexities of environmental and energy litigation.

She leverages her strong communication skills to distill intricate technical and scientific matters, empowering clients to overcome regulatory challenges and implement successful projects. Sonja represents clients in proceedings before FERC, state public utilities commissions, administrative agencies, and in state and federal court.

Prior to joining Dorsey, Sonja clerked for the Honorable Chief Judge Susan Segal at the Minnesota Court of Appeals, where she honed her legal research and analytical skills. Before entering the legal field, Sonja also worked as a natural resource manager. Her experience implementing and managing conservation projects equips her with a unique perspective that enhances her ability to provide guidance on environmental and energy regulatory compliance.

Sonja maintains an active pro bono practice, representing parents in ICWA proceedings and criminal defendants in state and federal court.

Court Admissions

- U.S. District Court for the District of Minnesota

Professional Affiliations

- Board Member, Minnesota State Bar Association Section on Energy, Natural Resources, and the Environment (ENRE)
- Member, Minnesota State Bar Association
- Member, Federal Bar Association
- Member, Minnesota Lavender Bar Association

Education

- University of Minnesota (J.D., 2023)
 - *cum laude*
- University of Minnesota, Duluth (Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Environmental Education, 2016)
 - Fulbright Scholar (2014-15)
- St. Olaf College (B.A., Political Science and Biology, 2014)
 - *magna cum laude*

Bar Admissions

- Minnesota

Clerkships

- Minnesota Court of Appeals, Honorable Chief Judge Susan Segal, 2023–2024
- U.S. District Court for the District of Minnesota, Honorable Magistrate Judge Becky R. Thorson, 2022–2022

Accolades

- MSBA, North Star Lawyer, 2025
- Consistently providing pro bono legal assistance to those in need through Dorsey's Pro Bono program

Languages

- German

Additional Information

- Minnesota DNR's Sept. 16, 2021 Line 3 Enforcement Action Demonstrates How Much Groundwater Permitting "Sucks", Minnesota Law Review, December 6, 2021