ArentFox Schiff LLP
Attorneys

Robert A.H. Middleton

PARTNER

Robert counsels clients on environmental and energy issues across a wide range of industries, including permitting, compliance, project development, transactions, and litigation, with a particular focus on solar energy projects.

Industries

Energy & Cleantech

Practices

Environmental
— Land Use & Infrastructure Litigation
Complex Litigation

Education

Northwestern University Pritzker School of Law, JD, cum laude, Northwestern Journal of Law and Social Policy, Member Teaching Assistant, Property, 2014

Washington University in St. Louis, BA, summa cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa, 2010

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Robert advises renewable energy developers, energy companies, and other businesses on the regulatory, transactional, and litigation issues that shape project development and operations. His practice spans the full lifecycle of renewable energy projects, from permitting, siting, and regulatory approvals to complex environmental litigation and transactional matters. Drawing on experience representing solar developers, emerging renewable energy companies, and clients navigating complex environmental requirements, Robert provides practical, business-focused counsel that helps clients advance projects, manage risk, and achieve strategic objectives.

Work Experience

Renewable Energy & Solar Project Development

Robert guides solar developers through every stage of project development, from permitting to regulatory approvals and project execution. He counsels clients on zoning, land use, and siting issues, represents developers before local governments and regulatory bodies, and helps navigate evolving renewable energy laws. His experience includes precedent-setting matters that have helped shape the legal framework governing solar development and approvals in Illinois.

Environmental & Regulatory Compliance + Permitting

He advises clients on environmental compliance, permitting, and risk management matters under the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, RCRA, CERCLA, and related state and local programs. He helps companies navigate complex regulatory requirements, manage environmental risk, conduct due diligence, and address operational compliance issues affecting day-to-day business activities.

Environmental & Commercial Litigation

Robert represents clients in complex environmental and commercial disputes, including government enforcement actions, environmental citizen suits, and private-party litigation. He regularly handles matters involving permitting, remediation, regulatory compliance, and project development, and has represented clients in appellate proceedings and industry-shaping disputes involving renewable energy projects.

Renewable Energy Transactions & Development Support

He advises renewable energy developers and investors on transactions supporting project acquisition, development, and financing. Robert's work includes negotiating, interpreting, and terminating member interest purchase agreements (MIPAs), conducting due diligence, and advising on risk allocation and other transactional issues affecting renewable energy assets throughout the project lifecycle.

Client Work

- Served as lead counsel securing a first in the state appellate court decision interpreting an Illinois solar siting law. The decision was a pivotal win for the industry, establishing that counties must approve solar siting for projects meeting statewide standards.
- Counsels renewable energy developers on member interest purchase agreements (MIPAs), including negotiation, termination, and interpretation in connection with project development and acquisitions.
- Advises renewable energy developers through city and county permitting processes, including securing approvals and negotiating with local governments and regulatory agencies.
- Represents solar developers in cutting-edge litigation and appeals involving Illinois renewable energy laws, helping shape the evolving legal framework governing solar siting and approvals.
- Successfully argued to limit the intervention of a community group that threatened to disrupt and derail settlement progress in an enforcement action.
- When the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit took on a case with potentially devastating repercussions for a client, Robert was part of the Schiff Hardin team that crafted an amicus brief for the court. The brief focused the court's attention on the injustice underlying the appellees' positions and the dire consequences of acquiescing to the appellees' requests.
- Represents clients in environmental citizen suits – actions brought by private citizens and organizations alleging violations of law – including ongoing litigation against a multinational organization to ensure investigation and, potentially, remediation of a future public park in Brooklyn, New York.
- Assists clients in negotiating agreements to access private property to execute remedial efforts. These negotiations have included everything from simple access agreements to land purchases.
- Assisted a county park in securing funding for a solar array to mitigate the park's frequent power outages, as part as a settlement negotiation
- Secured a favorable jury verdict for his pro bono client in a landlord-tenant dispute. This bitter dispute afforded Robert the opportunity to single-chair a jury trial and develop invaluable experience in settlement negotiations, motion practice, oral arguments, and client counseling.
- Represented clients through the Northwestern Pritzker School of Law Center on Wrongful Convictions for more than a decade, including advocating in state and federal courts on behalf of the wrongfully convicted.
- Advised on cases involving eyewitness misidentifications and coerced confessions.

Boards, Memberships & Certifications

- ACLU of Illinois, Board of Directors (2026 – present)
- ACLU of Illinois, Next Generation Society Board Member (2015-2025)
- Leadership Council on Legal Diversity, Pathfinder (2020)

Professional Activities

- Adjunct Professor, Trial Advocacy – Northwestern University (2021-present)

Publications, Presentations & Recognitions

Publications

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"The End of the Beginning of the Environmental Justice Era?" (co-author) *The Magazine for Environmental Managers* (2025)

- "EPA Places Environmental Justice Front and Center," (co-author) American Bar Association *Renewable, Alternative, and Distributed Energy Resources* (Apr. 20, 2022)

Recognitions

- Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch, *Best Lawyers* (2022-2024)

Bar Admissions

Illinois

Court Admissions

US Court of Appeals, District of Columbia Circuit
US Court of Appeals, 9th Circuit
US District Court, District of Colorado
US District Court, Northern District of Illinois
US District Court, Northern District of Ohio