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**Corporate, Securities, and Governance**



Environmental law has moved from a narrow slice of our field to one of the most complex and important.

I start my first message to you with words of sincere thanks to our Immediate Past Chair Bill Mordan. Through Bill's leadership, our global membership has grown to more than 40,000 in 85 countries, and our vision to build the global inside counsel bar has never been stronger. Since joining the ACC board five years ago, it has been a privilege to serve with him, and Bill, I promise that we'll continue to build on your great work. I am delighted to welcome to the board five outstanding new directors, all of whom are committed to our members and carrying out our mandate.

It's an exciting time at ACC. With the implementation of Strategic Plan 1.0 and last year's launch of Strategic Plan 2.0, we continue to enhance our offerings. This year, we introduced the ACC Credentialing Institute, which sets peer-approved standards of education, and the "Seat at the Table" initiative. Through this initiative, we're working to ensure your place in the C-suite and access to your company's board. If there's a business decision to make, we want to influence the culture of companies so that our members are at the table. Learn more at [acc.com/governance](https://acc.com/governance).

We've just wrapped up a terrific Annual Meeting in Austin, Texas, where I hope you were inspired by the program "Connect, Learn, Excel." Thank you to the ACC staff for the wonderful job organizing the event and to our members who attended. I enjoyed chatting with many of you and hearing the ideas you have that will help us provide useful and personalized membership experiences. I would love to keep the conversation going and hope you will email me regularly.

In addition to building the global inside counsel bar, I look forward to adding my voice to topics

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influencing our profession and wider business community, such as diversity and inclusion, environmental, social, and governance (ESG) and sustainability, ethics and compliance, and innovation.

This issue of the Docket focuses on environmental concerns, including a cover story on navigating spill reporting obligations. Environmental law has moved from a narrow slice of our field to one of the most complex and important. Consider this: The signatories of the United Nations Principles for Responsible Investment represent over US\$80 trillion in assets under management globally. That's bigger than the GDP of China, the United States, and Europe combined. There is clearly an identified business imperative to promote sustainability with our investors and other stakeholders. ESG is important because it acknowledges that for companies today, doing the right thing isn't just about complying with law — it's about being responsible companies focused on earning and sustaining the trust of all stakeholders. Trust is integral to our ability to do business today and into the future. But sustainability does include being legally compliant and understanding where emerging regulations will come from and how interational standards relate to legal expectations. As legal counsel, we play a critical role in advising our clients on how to navigate this complex mesh. As counsel for leading global businesses, we don't hold a sideline role where we abdicate our voice or advice, because the dimensions of risk go beyond hard law. We have as much to contribute, and there's too much at stake, so we must preserve our good reputations through a social license to operate by good sustainability practices. In doing so, we can also bring our voice to the executive table to identify both business opportunities and risks that have strategic implications.

In law school, we're often not taught to think about the role of a lawyer as a strategic advisor to our clients. The ESG space is an opportunity to bring our traditional strengths as legal advisors to unconventional new challenges and opportunities.

I look forward to working with the ACC leadership and staff to continue positioning the association for success and making you proud to be a member. We're just getting started.

[Simon Fish](#)



Executive Vice President and General Counsel

BMO Financial Group