

Wind Power

When new lawyers join a wind power practice group, they push for green policies.



By Adam Umanoff

Chadbourne & Parke (www.chadbourne.com) has long had green in its DNA. We have a tradition of serving clients who are developing renewable energy resources, such as wind, solar, geothermal, and biomass and biofuels (ethanol, etc.). With four offices in the U.S. and nine abroad, we have 452 attorneys and 482 support staff. We are based in New York.

Our environmental focus was strengthened twice last year. In February 2007, I was one of 10 wind energy attorneys who joined Chadbourne in Los Angeles. We devote our practice to wind power and alternative energy areas. The expansion substantially grew both the size and mix of the L.A. office and the predominance of our existing wind/renewables practices.

In March 2007, former New York governor George Pataki (dubbed “Mr. Alternative Energy” by Fox Business News) joined us, along with John Cahill, his former commissioner of New York’s Department of Environmental Conservation. Pataki and Cahill had a long environmental record in New York’s legislature, including promoting the state’s Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, adopted in 2005.

They now spearhead our Climate Change practice, and work on environmental and renewables issues. Pataki

is involved with climate change issues at the United Nations, and also serves as co-chair of the non-partisan Council on Foreign Relations Independent Task Force on Climate Change.

LOOKING INWARD

With the infusion of new “green business” lawyers, it was also time to look at what we were doing as a firm to promote environmental responsibility. Our lawyers and support staff realized it was no longer enough just to be serving clients in these areas. In July 2007, I began working with several partners to set the goal of becoming model environmental citizens. We saw this as a must — and win-win for Chadbourne. We researched costs and green products, and searched for a good consultant, the right vendors, and looked into certification by the American Bar Association-Environmental Protection Agency’s Law Office Climate Challenge.



From left: John Cahill, counsel at Chadbourne; author Adam Umanoff; Edward Zaelke, partner in the LA office.

The result of our research was a new program, launched on April 2, 2008, that complements our practice areas and changes the way we work. Focused on recycling and reductions in energy and resource consumption, our Green Initiative addresses changes large and small — recycling bins at desks, double-sided printing, greater use of recycled paper and Energy Star-rated equipment, and environmentally conscious vendor selection.

One significant step we took is the purchase of renewable energy certificates to offset 60% of our domestic energy use. Through these steps, the firm has qualified as a leader in the ABA-EPA's Law Office Climate Challenge, and we will do so annually (see www.abanet.org/enviro).

Our program includes:

- *Recycling*: Everyone has two recycling containers at his or her desk, labeled for paper and trash. Bottles and cans are recycled in bins in pantries.

- *Supplies*: General office supplies that contain recycled materials are used where available, e.g., our copier paper already has 30% recycled content. As stationery and business cards are replaced, they will use a higher content of recycled paper.

- *Paper*: Whenever possible, copiers and network printers are programmed to default to double-sided copies.

- *Equipment*: Copiers are Energy Star-designated. We use 40 copiers from Xerox Corp., Océ and Canon U.S.A. Inc. Wherever possible, new appliances and equipment purchased will be Energy Star-designated.

- *Furniture*: When possible, wood furniture is reconditioned/refinished with eco-friendly products, rather than replaced.

- *Carpets*: We clean them with environmentally friendly products, using Chemspec DFC105 (detergent free cleaning using synthetic chemistry), from Chemical Specialties Manufacturing Corp.

- *Paint*: We use a low-volatile organic compound paint (Benjamin Moore & Co.).

- *Bathrooms*: Urinals were changed from 1.0 to 0.5 GPF (gallons per flush), water closets (flushometers) from 1.6 to 0.5 GPF, and bathroom/pantry faucet

aerators from 2.2 to 0.5 GPM (gallons per minute).

- *Kitchen*: For plates and containers, we use Green Wave biodegradable products (natural fibers). Utensils: EarthSmart Products (made from corn and potato). Cups: Fabri-Kal Greenware.

We have established a green suggestion box for employees. Our green officers are Nancy Gray, senior director, operations and administration, and office manager Edna Moroney.

COSTS & BENEFITS

Of course, nothing is free, including our Green Initiative. But the costs, on balance, are extremely reasonable. Our initial investment to launch the program is approximately \$100,000. This includes the cost of stationery and supplies, renewable energy certificates and other elements of our program. The estimated amount will become more concrete as we progress through the first year of the program. We anticipate savings in some areas, offset by increased costs for eco-friendly supplies.

Since the mid-1980s, we have watched the climate change debate move from a curiosity to today's widely held view that climate change poses a real threat to the quality of our lives and the lives of our children and future generations. Our efforts to go green reflect our recognition of this challenge and our desire to do something practical about it.

Launching our program, at an old-line New York firm, was surprisingly easy — and we encourage others to take similar steps.

And it has been enthusiastically

embraced by our clients. We've even had a client ask for our help in establishing its own green practices — and we expect more will follow.

In fact, our clients are so interested in green developments and climate change issues that on June 18, 2008, more than 400 people attended Chadbourne's Green Business Summit in New York City.

Speakers on climate change and related issues included Pataki, New York's mayor Michael Bloomberg, Lawrence Kudlow of CNBC, and Andy Karsner, assistant energy secretary for energy efficiency and renewable energy, U.S. Department of Energy. Attendees included executives of green companies and investment banks.

For me, personally, this movement toward green is incredibly gratifying. Not many lawyers can say that they work in a high-growth area — wind alone has grown more than 25% each year for the past five years — and do very sophisticated work, but also be part of doing something to prevent the threat of climate change.

Renewables and green are growing throughout the U.S. and the world and are a big part of what we do at Chadbourne. **LTN**

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