



# Environmental, Social & Corporate Governance

Lathrop GPM has decades of experience guiding businesses through complex environmental, social, and corporate governance (ESG) matters. From regulatory compliance and sustainability efforts to gender pay-gap reporting and board representation, such issues are drawing heightened attention as regulators and investors increasingly evaluate organizations through an ESG lens.

Our multidisciplinary team of ESG practitioners has helped companies meet disclosure requirements and corporate responsibility measurements in tandem with their business objectives - decades before ESG criteria became table stakes for many investors.

Lathrop GPM has represented and counseled clients across a wide range of sectors, from energy and agribusiness to education and nonprofit, on an array of ESG-related issues and can navigate these requests on behalf of both public and privately held companies.

## **Understanding ESG**

Environmental, social, and governance (ESG) metrics are used to assess the behavior and goals of companies and organizations. Socially conscious investors use ESG standards to screen potential investments. Government and regulatory bodies can use them to ensure compliance or allocate funds, contracts, and grants. By disclosing current ESG performance or setting out future goals - which might involve lowering carbon emissions, employing fair labor practices or ensuring diversity among board members - companies can prepare for regulatory shifts and demonstrate their commitment to meeting requirements tied to sustainable, responsible, and ethical investing strategies.

## **Environmental**

Lathrop GPM has maintained an exceptional environmental practice for over three decades, advising and defending clients on issues involving

water regulations and quality, solid and hazardous waste compliance, and air pollution. The firm also assists organizations with environmental justice issues related to cleanup and enforcement. We have helped clients involved with federal Superfund sites and state analogs - which require largescale environmental remediation and cleanup - and have worked in concert with expert consultants and other professional service firms to assist businesses with permitting, regulatory compliance, and disaster response.

Our regulatory compliance and toxic tort team advises clients on communication strategies for local communities and governments, and preparing clients for public meetings and community forums. Lathrop GPM has also advised natural resource companies on ways to improve efficiency and operate profitably while reducing their environmental footprint and land use.

Our corporate legal teams collaborate with our environmental lawyers to inform clients about ESG criteria, prepare them to respond to potential information requests, and meet requirements for government funding.

### **Social**

Lathrop GPM is known for helping organizations advance efforts on gender and racial diversity and comply with regulatory and other requirements concerning labor and discrimination issues. We have guided clients - including B corporations, nonprofits, higher education, and more - on hiring underrepresented groups, conducting internal audits, assessing compensation and pay equity discrepancies, evaluating contract discrimination claims, and structuring diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I) initiatives that comply with federal, state, and local laws.

On behalf of a large corporate client, for instance, the firm coordinated to set up a fund focused on remediating racial disparities in real estate ownership as a result of uncovering past discriminatory practices, like redlining. The fund focused on rebuilding equity and home ownership through education.

We have a multidisciplinary team of attorneys with deep experience in higher education, counseling colleges, universities, and professional schools on issues related to sexual harassment, affirmative action and admissions, and negative social media campaigns, as well as transgender and First Amendment rights.

### **Governance**

Our firm advises public and privately held companies on disclosure of risks related to ESG compliance and on ESG plans in areas ranging from carbon emissions and labor issues to efforts ensuring equitable and diverse corporate governance. Lathrop GPM has a proven track record navigating the legal implications of restructuring leadership, adopting new core values and introducing transparency to meet ESG-related standards. Those include advising clients on defining and substantiating commitments to ethical and sustainable supply chains and assessing legal obligations tied to those commitments.

Lathrop GPM has also helped our clients diversify boards, introduce new inclusive policies, and develop DE&I training sessions for leadership. The firm can also advise companies on responding to activist investors and counsel on environmental justice issues, leveraging our deep experience with environmental remediation, regulatory compliance, and disaster response.

### **Our ESG Efforts**

At Lathrop GPM, we counsel some of the nation's largest corporations on ESG practices - not just because we know them front-to-back, but because we have implemented them at our own firm. Those initiatives include:

- Targeted philanthropy through the Lathrop GPM Foundation, which focuses on making charitable contributions - through grantmaking and support of volunteerism - in our communities
- Top-down commitment to creating an inclusive, client-focused workplace where everyone is empowered to bring their full, authentic selves to work
- Building of a diverse supplier network

- Providing pro bono services for civil justice reform and human rights cases
- Redesigning the firm's office space to support a hybrid work model and provide flexibility while increasing collaboration
- Embracing green initiatives and making environmentally responsible decisions to do our part in preserving our environment and improving the communities where we live and work.

### **Our Approach to ESG**

We regularly advise and represent clients on the following ESG-related compliance and disclosure matters:

- Environmental crisis management
- Diversity and inclusion in management and boards
- Gender-based pay equity discrepancies
- Solid and hazardous waste compliance

### **Our Multidisciplinary ESG Team**

Contact a member of our Multidisciplinary ESG Team with any questions concerning ESG compliance and meeting sustainability objectives.