



Kelley Drye Expands Environmental Practice With Seasoned DOJ Senior Litigators Laura Duncan and Frances Morris

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Strategic additions enhance the firm's commercial and environmental litigation capabilities in the Texas and Washington, D.C. markets.

Kelley Drye & Warren LLP announced today that [Laura W. Duncan](#), a first-chair senior trial lawyer in the U.S. Department of Justice's (DOJ) Environment and Natural Resources Division (ENRD), has joined the firm's Houston office as a partner. Fellow DOJ senior trial lawyer from the ENRD, [Frances Bishop Morris](#), joins the firm's Washington, D.C. office as a special counsel.

Laura's nearly 10 years in DOJ's ENRD were marked by a record of leading teams of lawyers and experts through every aspect of high-value, complex, multi-phase mass plaintiff cases and other suits against the government involving environmental, resource, and property matters. Laura was lead trial counsel for the United States in a number of large matters, including in the multi-billion dollar takings litigations resulting from record-setting flooding in Houston from Hurricane Harvey.

Frances' five years in DOJ's ENRD included roles—often alongside Laura and as lead counsel—in numerous cases involving novel applications of the Fifth Amendment of the United States Constitution, including serving as co-lead counsel for the Hurricane Harvey Takings Litigation. Prior to this, she spent several years in private practice handling a broad spectrum of environmental and energy matters for a diverse client base, including defending all aspects of necessary federal approvals and permits for large-scale infrastructure and development projects.

"We are excited to welcome Laura and Frances to Kelley Drye," said partner and co-chair of the firm's national Environmental Law practice group, [Bill Jackson](#). "Their impressive record of environment and natural resources litigation success at DOJ will be invaluable to clients seeking fierce advocacy in disputes involving natural resources damages, environmental contamination, land use, and related matters."

"The addition of Laura and Frances underscores the growth of Kelley Drye's broader Litigation practice and the complex, high-stakes matters clients rely on us to tackle," said [Dana Rosenfeld](#), Kelley Drye's managing partner. "Laura's addition in particular aligns with our goal of expanding our presence in Texas."

During her tenure at the DOJ, Laura earned a reputation for her effective advocacy, courtroom agility, and thorough mastery of a wide variety of technical experts across a broad array of environmental and scientific subject matters. Additionally, Laura is known for holistic case strategies and for her ability to engage and bridge gaps with opposing counsel in ways that facilitate

constructive, positive resolutions.

“I am thrilled to be joining Kelley Drye’s Environmental Litigation practice,” said Laura. “The firm is well-known for litigating record-setting environmental and natural resource damages matters across the country. It’s an honor to join this stellar team.”

Laura received her J.D. from the University of Houston Law Center, and a B.S. and M.A. from the University of Texas, Austin. Frances received her J.D. from The Catholic University of America, Columbus School of Law, and a B.A. from James Madison University.

Kelley Drye’s deep bench of litigators represents clients in high-stakes disputes throughout the United States, with a focus on complex commercial litigation, regulatory enforcement, and internal investigations. Today a team of Kelley Drye attorneys led by Jackson begins the first of several landmark bench trials on behalf of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection against DuPont related to PFAS contamination at the Chambers Works site in Salem County, NJ (*New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection et al. v. E.I. DuPont de Nemours and Co. et al.*, case number 1:19-cv-14766, in the U.S. District Court for the District of New Jersey).