

The Hodgson Russ Municipal Law Practice Group provides a full range of legal services to our municipal clients throughout New York State. The group is multidisciplinary in nature, involving lawyers who regularly counsel clients in the areas of labor and employment law, public finance law, zoning and land use, environmental law, general municipal law, construction projects, and litigation and litigation avoidance, among others. Whether as general counsel, bond counsel, or as special counsel for specific projects or matters, Hodgson Russ attorneys can assist in all phases of municipal operations.

Land use and zoning

Hodgson Russ attorneys regularly provide service to municipalities in all aspects of land use and zoning matters. The firm's services in this area include:

- ▶ Assisting in preparation of master plans and drafting local statutes to implement master plans and other desired changes in local regulation.
- ▶ Providing complete guidance in complying with the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). Hodgson Russ has assisted many communities in all phases of the SEQRA process, from preparation of environmental assessment forms through issuance of negative and positive declarations and drafting and review of environmental impact statements. Hodgson Russ has successfully represented numerous municipalities in litigation arising out of the SEQRA review process.
- ▶ Providing legal representation for planning boards and zoning boards to address applications and interpret local codes and state law. Hodgson Russ has assisted in drafting decisions and statements of findings, as well as in guiding municipalities through complex approval processes.
- ▶ Providing assistance in dealing with regulatory requirements such as historic preservation regulations and reviews by state agencies such as the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.
- ▶ Assisting in reviewing proposals for alternative energy systems such as wind farms. Efforts include drafting ordinances, reviewing specific proposals, and defending decisions.

Environmental law

The Hodgson Russ Environmental Law Practice Group provides comprehensive legal services to municipal clients as they navigate the complex body of law and regulations

designed to protect public health and the environment. Clients include municipalities facing the full range of environmental questions concerning siting landfills, removing underground storage tanks, and CERCLA cost recovery actions. We have guided many projects through the SEQRA process.

Attorneys in the Environmental Law Practice Group counsel clients in environmental matters involving litigation in state and federal courts and administrative proceedings before state and federal agencies. The group's members regularly work with attorneys in the Municipal Law Practice Group in matters relating to environmental compliance, insurance, and audits and potential environmental liabilities associated with transfers of assets and financing transactions. The group has experience handling matters involving SEQRA, RCRA, TSCA, CERCLA, the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, toxic torts, and related insurance questions.

Hodgson Russ also assists communities in obtaining funding for environmental remediation. The firm is well versed in the New York State Clean Air/Clean Water Bond Act programs and grant requirements and has successfully represented communities in obtaining financing for such projects. Additionally, Hodgson Russ works with municipalities to recover costs from responsible parties.

Public finance

Hodgson Russ maintains an extensive public finance practice. The firm's attorneys regularly counsel municipalities, school districts, public agencies, and authorities with respect to all aspects of their cash flow and infrastructure financings, from the structuring phase through the closing of permanent financing. In doing so, the firm's attorneys work with the financial advisors, engineers, architects, and other professionals retained by the client, as well as representatives of the Rural Development Administration and, in New York State, the Dormitory Authority, the Environmental Facilities Corporation, the State Education Department, and other involved agencies. The group also provides legal services to underwriters, banks, trustees, and project developers in connection with a wide range of municipal, project development, and other public financings.

The firm is listed in the Municipal Bond Attorneys section of *The Bond Buyer's Directory of Municipal Bond Dealers of the United States* (the so-called "Red Book"). Hodgson Russ attorneys have acted as bond counsel or underwriter's counsel in

connection with the issuance of industrial revenue bonds, revenue anticipation notes, tax anticipation notes, budget notes, certificates of participation, statutory installment bonds, bond anticipation notes, and serial bonds.

Hodgson Russ has been certified by the New York State Authority Budget Office as an approved provider of Public Authorities Accountability Act training. Under the act, board members and executive officers of industrial development agencies, governmentally affiliated nonprofit corporations, public authorities, urban renewal agencies, and other entities covered by the Public Authorities Accountability Act must participate in approved training regarding their legal, fiduciary, financial, and ethical responsibilities as members or officers of such covered entities.

Labor and employment law

Our labor and employment clients include public employers with both union and nonunion workforces. The firm's labor attorneys represent well over 100 public sector clients in the areas of contract negotiation, dispute resolution, discrimination case defense, and more. We regularly advise on matters arising from employee grievances and interpretation of union contracts. We aggressively defend employment discrimination matters in administrative and judicial forums.

We have extensive experience advising clients on compliance with New York State and federal laws and regulations concerning wage and hour laws, development of employment policies, employee discipline and discharge, and compliance with all other employment regulations affecting the employment relationship in New York State.

The firm's labor attorneys regularly appear before the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the U.S. Department of Labor, the New York Public Employment Relations Board (PERB), as well as before other state administrative agencies involved in employment matters and both state and federal courts.

Litigation

Hodgson Russ represents municipalities in all judicial and administrative forums, successfully litigating municipal issues at all levels, including the United States Supreme Court.

Litigation attorneys are resident in each of our offices, supported by a full complement of experienced paralegal specialists and staff. This experience and depth allows the firm to competently and efficiently handle litigation in any forum and to respond immediately to the problems or emergencies frequently encountered in complex litigation.

Litigation services include full representation at all administrative levels. The firm regularly represents clients at state agency hearings, and it provides representation for local governing boards in the permit-issuing process.

We have successfully litigated a wide array of zoning, employment, environmental, and numerous other cases for and on behalf of municipalities. Our successes include the defense of permit decisions and the environmental review process for numerous large projects throughout New York. We consistently defend town boards, planning boards, and zoning boards in connection with decisions made for their communities.

For more information, please contact a member of the Municipal Law Practice Group:

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