

Society of Construction Law Establishes Delaware Valley Regional Division

WRITTEN BY

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Maybe more than ever, the construction industry and field of construction law appear poised to experience a period of significant growth. As the United States continues to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic and with Congress's recent interest in major infrastructure legislation, the development and execution of critical infrastructure may become all the more significant for the economies of the United States and the Philadelphia region. Indeed, the proposed infrastructure legislation currently advancing through Congress is comprised of investments in roads and transport, power generation, communication networks, management of water, and education facilities. Planned spending includes more than \$250 billion for transportation infrastructure, including the development of infrastructure for the electric vehicle market. See B. Sprunt, "Here's What's Included in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill," NPR (Aug. 10, 2021); A. Bhatia & Q. Bui, "The Infrastructure Plan: What's In and What's Out," N.Y. Times (Aug. 10, 2021). Further, the Senate has proposed another quarter of a trillion dollars to finance projects associated with clean drinking water, expansion of broadband, and power infrastructure. While the precise terms of the proposed federal infrastructure legislation remain in flux, the planned spending goals will almost certainly present opportunities for state and local officials to revamp aging infrastructure throughout the Philadelphia region.

With the influx of significant capital investment into infrastructure projects around the United States comes a renewed focus on the legal framework underpinning the execution and resolution of disputes related to large-scale infrastructure projects. Indeed, as the construction sector is well aware, the planning and execution of construction and infrastructure projects is a complex and risky endeavor that heavily relies on a developed legal framework that enables participants to secure financing, manage risks, and efficiently resolve disputes.

In light of the above, construction industry stakeholders and construction law practitioners, now more than ever, have reason to collectively benefit from their shared experiences and knowledge. To that end, the North American chapter of the Society of Construction Law recently established a regional division to serve the greater Philadelphia region.

The Society of Construction Law was founded in the United Kingdom in 1983 and has developed across the world into an international group of 3,000 members. The Society holds meetings, lectures and social events, publishes papers, supports educational bodies, and generally promotes interest in construction law.

In 2017, the Society of Construction Law expanded into North America with the foundation of the Society of Construction Law North America. Since that time, the Society of Construction Law North America's presence has steadily expanded through regional divisions and initiatives.

The new Delaware Valley Region, serving the greater Philadelphia region, is the latest addition to that effort and is led by three regional directors: Zach Torres-Fowler of Troutman Pepper Hamilton Sanders, Michael DeRita of The Chiumento Law Group, and Phil Urwin of Berkeley Research Group. Torres-Fowler is an attorney who concentrates his practice on construction-related disputes and specializes in complex domestic and international arbitration proceedings. DeRita is an attorney who focuses his practice on complex commercial disputes, specifically construction-related matters on behalf of design professionals, owners and contractors. Urwin is a construction industry consultant, expert witness and Director of BRG's Global Construction practice with over 20 years of experience, including over a decade in the field in trades, supervision, and construction management roles.

As a result, construction industry representatives, legal practitioners, and experts within the greater Philadelphia region will now have access to a unique platform to connect, learn, and promote the development of the field of construction law. The Society of Construction Law North American regularly organizes substantive presentations, conferences, and networking events concerning the field of construction law. Furthermore, all members gain access to access to the Society of Construction Law's library of publications from the North American and all international chapters. Indeed, many of these publications—such as the Society of Construction Law's Delay and Disruption Protocol—have profoundly influenced the practice of construction law around the world. As a result, with the establishment of the Delaware Valley Region of the Society of Construction Law North America, the Philadelphia region will gain access to a wide variety of resources ranging from issues affecting local and regional construction to international practices and developments in construction management and dispute resolution.

To become a member of the Society of Construction Law North America or offer thoughts on subjects of interest, visit the website www.scl-na.org where you can find publications, upcoming events and information and contact details for the Delaware Valley Region directors.

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