Shannon R. Varner
Counsel

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Shannon's blend of legislative work, public service, and decades of experience positions him to provide innovative strategies to address environmental issues ranging from development of market-based environmental compliance programs to facilitation of property transactions while limiting liability exposure.

OVERVIEW

Shannon joined the firm in 1999 after serving as a senior environmental attorney to the Virginia General Assembly, where he provided environmental and natural resources legal and policy guidance to all General Assembly members and drafted some of Virginia's most significant environmental legislation during the 1993-1999 sessions.

Shannon regularly advises clients on a wide range of environmental issues, including creation and use of market-based approaches to environmental compliance, such as stream, wetland, and nutrient mitigation banks; environmental due diligence; brownfield redevelopment; voluntary remediation programs; permitting; and compliance issues. Working for entrepreneurs, he gained passage of Virginia's stormwater nutrient-trading statute and has been active in its implementation, including with respect to certification of the first nutrient bank and first sale of nonpoint nutrient credits in Virginia.

He also facilitates property transactions throughout the U.S. by handling due diligence matters; species, wetlands, stormwater, and cultural resources issues; environmental permitting; and risk reduction and allocation of liabilities through contracts and other mechanisms. Further, Shannon leverages his years of public service to develop and advocate for legislative and regulatory initiatives to promote his clients' objectives.

REPRESENTATIVE MATTERS

- Oversaw and used environmental due diligence and remediation programs throughout the Mid-Atlantic and South, facilitating the acquisition and development of hundreds of properties for a multinational retailer.
- Utilized brownfield and voluntary remediation programs, environmental audits, and environmental due diligence for compliance purposes and industrial and commercial property transactions.
- Advise multiple financial institutions on environmental liabilities associated with borrower properties and provide mechanisms to limit potential environmental liability-related exposure.
- Representation of associations, coalitions, localities, interest groups, and individual entities in promoting, amending, or defeating legislation and budget proposals.
- Counsel to the Virginia Environmental Restoration Association, fostering expansion of wetland, stream, and

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nutrient banking.

- Assisting the U.S.'s largest environmental mitigation provider in the expansion of existing markets and development of new markets for environmental credits (streams, wetlands, nutrients, and species).

AWARDS

- *Best Lawyers in America®:* Environmental Law (2024-2027)
- *Legal 500 United States*: Environment: Environment: Regulatory (2025)
- *Chambers USA*: Environment, Virginia (2011-2026)

TOP AREAS OF FOCUS

- Ecosystem Markets
- Environmental + Natural Resources
- Environmental Due Diligence
- Water Quality + Water Resources

ALL AREAS OF FOCUS

- Contaminated Sites + Waste Management
- Ecosystem Markets
- Environmental + Natural Resources
- Environmental Due Diligence
- Environmental Insurance Coverage
- Natural Resources
- Release Reporting
- Renewable Energy
- Water Quality + Water Resources

PROFESSIONAL/COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Member, Virginia Bar Association
- Member, Environmental Law Section, Richmond Bar Association (vice chair, 2000-2001; chair, 2001-2002; executive committee, 2001-2002)
- Member, Natural Resource Committee, Virginia Chamber of Commerce

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Senior attorney, Division of Legislative Services, Commonwealth of Virginia, 1992-1999

EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATIONS

EDUCATION

- Tulane University School of Law, LL.M., 1992, energy and environmental law
- Lewis & Clark Law School, J.D., 1984

- Arizona State University, B.S., 1981

BAR ADMISSIONS

- Virginia

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

- Speaker, “Water Supply: Important Considerations and New Developments,” Local Government Attorneys of Virginia 2018 Fall Conference, Leesburg, VA, October 2018.
- Speaker and Facilitator, “Knowledge Development Forum – Watershed Based Approaches – Ideas to Implementation,” WEFTEC 2018, New Orleans, LA, September 2018.
- Speaker, “All Appropriate Inquiries, Voluntary Remediation Programs, and Brownfield Redevelopment,” multiple presentations to a variety of industry, real estate, and retail development groups and clients, 2000-2017.
- Speaker and Moderator, “Better Nutrient Reductions Through Watershed-Based Permitting,” WEFTEC 2017, Chicago, IL, October 2017.
- Speaker, “Environmental Issues Q&A,” Fannie Mae Multifamily Legal Issues Forum, Charleston, SC, May 2017.
- Speaker and Moderator, “Environmental Markets Relating to Species, Wetlands, Streams and Nutrients,” panel discussion, Virginia Mitigation Banking Association Fall Conference, Richmond, VA, October 2016.
- Speaker, “Stormwater Management and Water Quality Trading as a Means to Meet Chesapeake Bay TMDL Requirements,” National Association of Home Builders Chesapeake Bay Region Roundtable Meeting, Washington, D.C., June 2016.
- Speaker, “Virginia’s Water Resources Plan 2015: Fitting Puzzle Pieces or Prelude to Policy Change?” Virginia Bar Association, Winter Meeting, Williamsburg, VA, January 2016.
- Moderator, “Water Quality Trading Fundamentals,” plenary session, EPA-USDA National Workshop on Water Quality Trading Markets, Lincoln, NE, September 2015.
- Speaker, “Virginia’s Stormwater Nutrient Trading Program,” Chesapeake Bay Regional Forum, EPA-USDA National Workshop on Water Quality Trading Markets, Lincoln, NE, September 2015.
- Speaker, “Environmental Due Diligence, Lender Liability and Risk Management,” Virginia Bankers Association, Lenders Committee, Richmond, VA, January 2015.
- Speaker, “Water Quality Trading,” U.S. Water Alliance’s One Water Leadership Summit 2014, Kansas City, KS, Sept. 15-17, 2014.
- Speaker, “TMDL Legal & Regulatory Interpretation,” TMDL Readiness Workshop: A Collaborative Discussion About TMDL Action Planning, Timmons Group, Richmond, VA, June 10, 2014.
- Speaker, “Land Development, Nutrient Banking, and Expansion of the Nutrient Credit Exchange,” Virginia Military Institute’s 22nd Annual Environment Virginia Symposium, April 2011.
- Speaker, “Environmental Legislation From the 2006 Session of the Virginia General Assembly,” Environmental Affairs Committee, Virginia Manufacturers Association, April 2006.
- Speaker, “Water Reuse Legislation and Regulation” (2005), “Environmental Pollutant Trading and Implementation Options” (2003), and “Self-Disclosure of Potential Environmental Violations Through Environmental Audits” (2003), multiple presentations at the Virginia Manufacturers Association Annual Environmental Conference.
- Speaker, “Virginia’s New Wetlands Law and Regulations” and “Potential 2001 Environmental Legislative Activities,” Virginia Environmental Law Compliance Course presentations, Dec. 4-5, 2000.
- Speaker, “Source Water Protection and Virginia’s Dillon Rule,” Virginia Chapter of the American Planning Association and Virginia Citizens Planning Association Annual Conference, March 2000.
- Speaker, “Environmental Legislation From the 2000 General Assembly Session,” Continuing Legal Education

presentation, Environmental Law Section, Richmond Bar Association, March 2000.

- Speaker, “Conservation Provisions of the Constitution of Virginia,” Continuing Legal Education presentation, Law School for Legislators, April 1999.
- Speaker, “Virginia’s Environmental Audit Law,” Continuing Legal Education presentation, Virginia Bar Association Annual Meeting, Virginia Beach, VA, June 1998.
- Speaker, “Article XI of the Constitution of Virginia: Conservation,” Continuing Legal Education presentation, Richmond, VA, June 1998.

PUBLICATIONS

- Co-author, “US Army Corps of Engineers Finalizes 2026 Nationwide Permit Package,” *Troutman Pepper Locke*, January 13, 2026.
- Author, “The Case for Water Quality Trading,” *National Water Quality Trading Alliance*, July 27, 2016.
- Co-author, *Virginia Environmental Law Handbook* (2008, 4th ed.), Government Institutes, Inc., Rockville, MD.

MEDIA COMMENTARY

- Mentioned, “The Bay Is Cleaner, but There’s a Cost,” *NAHBNow*, June 10, 2016.
- Quoted, “Virginia Nutrient Trading Proposal Called Model for Chesapeake Bay States, Others,” *Bloomberg BNA Daily Environment Report*, Dec. 16, 2014.