SpencerFane®

William J. (Bill) Curtis

Partner

Contact

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Overview

Bill Curtis represents clients in government investigations and environmental litigation related to syndicated conservation easements, carbon and energy credits, and traditional environmental issues. He represents professionals, companies, and investors navigating the confluence of environmental, energy, and tax law by employing deep experience handling high-stakes investigations spearheaded by the DOJ, IRS, EPA, and other state and federal regulators. His individualized approach to client matters and attention to detail allow him to provide clients with solutions tailored to their unique needs and risk profiles.

In his work related to syndicated conservation easements and carbon and energy credits, Bill works with clients to develop comprehensive plans to avoid potential civil, criminal, and administrative litigation and proceedings. He also uses specialized legal acumen gained from managing complex investigations to identify civil and criminal enforcement risks associated with the creation or use of carbon and energy tax credits to help individuals and businesses obtain favorable outcomes.

In his vast environmental practice, Bill focuses on regulatory enforcement actions related to the sale, use, release, or disposal of potentially hazardous materials, including mercury, PCBs, lead, benzene, and PAHs. He has provided representation in everything from mass torts and class actions to CERCLA matters to environmental citizen suits, working closely with relevant field experts – including hydrologists, toxicologists, epidemiologists, and engineers – to create robust courtroom strategies and strong positions for negotiated settlements.

Education

- The George Washington University Law School, 2000 (J.D.)
- Truman State University, 1997 (B.S.)

Bar Admissions

- Missouri, 2000
- Illinois, 2001

Court Admissions

- U.S. Tax Court, 2025

Distinctions

- *Best Lawyers in America*, Commercial Litigation, 2025-2027; Mass Tort Litigation / Class Actions – Defendants, 2025-2027
- *Missouri Lawyers Media,* POWER List, Environmental and Energy Law, 2022-2025
- *Missouri & Kansas Super Lawyers*, Rising Star, Class Action/Mass Torts, 2008-2010

Memberships

- The Missouri Bar

Presentations and Publications

- "The IRS's 'New' Syndicated Conservation Easement Settlement Offer: Deja Vu All Over Again?" *CPA Practice Advisor,* June 2026
- "*Safe Harboring Solar Projects Now to Avoid Future Energy Shocks*," *Solar Power World*, March 2026
- "U.S. Department of Justice Indictment Signals Increasing Scrutiny of Carbon Credits," *Pratt's Energy Law Report, Vol 25 No 3*, March 2025
- "IRS Final Regulations for Syndicated Conservation Easements: Impact on Structuring and Defending Easement Transactions," Strafford Webinars, March 2025
- "Conservation Easement Cases Weave Web Of Uncertainty," *Law360*, November 2024
- "The Tax Man Cometh: Preparing for Future IRS Enforcement," The ABA's Southeastern White Collar Crime Institute, September 2024
- "Conservation Easements," Federal Bar Association Summer Tax Summit, August 2024
- "1st Tax Easement Convictions Will Likely Embolden DOJ, IRS," *Law360*, September 2023

Related Experience

- Represented a manufacturer and two executives in a criminal investigation into the allegedly improper marketing of energy tax credits by the DOJ, EPA, and IRS. No civil or criminal proceedings were brought against the manufacturer or its executives after demonstrating the client's compliance through the strategic use of experts.
- Represented a large cement company in a mass tort case where plaintiffs alleged hauling operations created a nuisance for those living along the hauling route. The case settled after helping the client successfully lobby the state for legislation that provided the client with limited immunity for its operations.
- Defended a manufacturer in a putative class action filed by nearby residents who alleged their property was contaminated due to a large fire and explosion at the manufactures plant. The case was resolved without any funds from the client.

- Represented a manufacturer in a putative class action alleging property damage from a release of mercury. After a multiple-day hearing, the court denied the motion for class certification and the case, along with nine other personal injury cases, was favorably settled.
- Defended a chemical company in a 300-plus plaintiff action alleging property damage and emotional distress from mercury released at a mercury cell chlor-alkali plant. The case settled favorably after plaintiffs' experts were excluded.
- Helped obtain defense verdict for a global provider of ingredients and solutions to the food and beverage industry, in a two-week, 13-plaintiff toxic tort case in state court in southern Alabama. The jury returned the a verdict in favor of the defendant after just 45 minutes.
- Represented a pipeline company in multiple environmental and toxic tort matters related to a plume of gasoline under a residential neighborhood. All of the matters settled favorably.
- Represented a client located in Alabama that was sued in New Jersey by plaintiffs who sought a medical monitoring class action in New Jersey because Alabama did not recognize claims for medical monitoring. Plaintiffs claimed that New Jersey had an interest in the case because waste was shipped from New Jersey to their state. The New Jersey State Court dismissed the plaintiffs' claim because New Jersey was not the right forum.