

James I. Cohen

Partner

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Jim practices at the intersection of law and politics. Based on decades of experience as a regulatory lawyer, mediator, government relations professional, and elected official — including as Mayor of Portland, Jim helps clients in heavily regulated industries achieve their legal and policy goals before state and local regulatory agencies and legislative bodies.

Jim's unique background allows him to provide clients not only with insightful legal advice, but also with creative solutions involving public relations, facilitation, and outreach to key government, business, and community leaders. His experience in public service and leadership positions on multiple business and nonprofit boards gives him a deep understanding of government and a broad range of connections within Maine's business and political community.

Applying these skills across a wide range of regulated industries, Jim has helped craft or modify laws and regulations, represented clients in adjudicatory proceedings before government agencies and the courts, assisted clients in complex business transactions, facilitated stakeholder groups, and provided a wide range of legal and public policy advice.

Jim is an avid runner, biker, skier, "golfer" (quotes intentionally added), and sometimes guitar player.

In addition to Jim's main services and industries, he also focuses on the following unique areas:

- Municipal Law
- Procurement
- Transportation
- Substance Use Disorder Treatment
- [See additional Practice Area background here.](#)

Education

- Columbia University School of Law (J.D.)

Services/Industries

- Telecommunications
- Energy
- Government & Public Relations
- Water and Wastewater Systems

- Princeton University, Princeton School of Public and International Affairs (A.B., *cum laude*)
- University of Southern Maine (Certificate Program in Mediation)

Public Service

- Mayor, City of Portland (2005-06), Portland City Council (2002-08)
- Portland Charter Commission, Vice Chair (2009-10)
- Cumberland County Budget Committee (2003-05)(Chair, 2005)
- Portland Regional Chamber of Commerce, Chair (2012-14), Trustee (2008-2016; 2019-2021)
- Portland Community Chamber of Commerce, Board President (2019-2021), Trustee (2017-2023)
- Portland Regional Chamber of Commerce, Advocacy Committee (2009-present)
- Maine State Chamber of Commerce, Trustee (2009-present)
- Portland Trails, President (1997-98), Advisory Trustee (2002-present)
- Project Green Schools, Advisory Trustee (2017-present)
- Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA), Board Chair (2022-present)
- [See More Public Service](#)

Bar Admissions

- Maine

Court and Other Admissions

- U.S. District Court for the District of Maine

Memberships

- Maine State Bar Association: Consumer and Financial Institutions Section, Chair (1999-2000), Member (1996-present)
- Maine Association of Mediators, Board of Governors (2008-2010)
- Federal Communications Bar Association, New England Chapter, Steering Committee Member (2012-present)

Honors

- AV® rated by *Martindale-Hubbell*
- Recognized in *Chambers USA: America's Leading Lawyers for Business* under Energy & Natural Resources Law
- Listed in *The Best Lawyers in America*® for Administrative/Regulatory Law, Government Relations Practice, Energy Regulatory Law in Portland, Maine
- Selected by peers for inclusion in *New England Super Lawyers*® under Utilities, Banking and Government Relations
- Recognized by Best Lawyers® as the 2020 Portland, Maine Energy Law Lawyer of the Year
- Neal W. Allen Award for Leadership in the Public Sector (2009)

- Ruth M. Shaper Memorial Award, Maine Public Health Association (2008)
- Public Service for the Environment Award, Sierra Club, ME Chapter (2006)

To learn more about third-party ratings and rankings, and the selection processes used for inclusion, [click here](#).

Blog Posts: Environmental and Energy Law Update

The Environmental and Energy Law Update blog provides an analysis and discussion of the most critical and timely legal issues and announcements environmental, natural resource, and energy sectors.

December 4, 2023

Maine PUC Amends Small Generator Interconnection Procedures Rules (Chapter 324)

On November 3, 2023, the Maine Public Utilities Commission (the “Commission”) issued an Order adopting amendments to its Small Generator Interconnection Procedures Rule (Chapter 324). Background. Chapter 324 was last amended on December 21, 2021. See Maine Public Utilities...

November 14, 2023

Maine Voters Reject “Pine Tree Power” Proposal

Last Tuesday, by a margin of 70% to 30%, Maine voters rejected Question 3, the highest profile issue on the Maine ballot this year. Question 3 was placed on the ballot earlier this year, and under the terms of...

March 28, 2023

Carolyn Gilbert Nominated to Maine PUC

On March 28, Governor Janet Mills nominated Carolyn “Carrie” Gilbert to serve a six-year term on the Maine Public Utilities Commission. For the past 15 years, Gilbert has worked at Daymark Energy Advisors where she provides consulting services on...

March 7, 2023

Crisis emerges in Maine over safe disposal of biosolids from wastewater treatment plants

Maine wastewater treatment plants are currently facing intense challenges concerning disposal of their sewage sludge, also called “biosolids.” This is a fast-moving issue getting significant coverage in the media and substantial attention from state officials and legislators. The...

March 2, 2023

Maine PUC Asked to Fix “Leapfrogging” Problem Triggered by 2022 Changes to Maine’s Generator Interconnection Rule

The Maine Public Utilities Commission is currently considering whether to commence a formal emergency rulemaking process to amend Chapter 324 of its

rules governing generator interconnections. The purpose of the rulemaking would be to correct a growing problem whereby...

December 6, 2022

Maine PUC to Kick Off Review of Grid Plan to Assist Clean Energy Transition

Last month, the Maine Public Utilities Commission initiated a proceeding to identify the priorities to be addressed in an electric grid plan that will assist Maine in the “cost-effective transition to a clean, affordable, and reliable electric grid.” A...

February 3, 2022

Verrill Alum Bill Harwood Sworn in as Public Advocate for State of Maine

On January 26, 2022, Maine Governor Janet Mills swore in Bill Harwood as Public Advocate for the State of Maine. Bill was unanimously confirmed by the Maine State Senate and the Legislature’s Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and...

April 22, 2021

Task Force Releases Report on Modernizing Maine’s Electric Grid

On April 14, 2020, the Nature Conservancy and The Great Plans Institute announced the final report of the Maine Utility Regulatory Reform and Decarbonization Initiative (MURRDI) which outlines a series of steps Maine can take to modernize its electric...

March 24, 2020

COVID-19 Alert: State of Maine and City of Portland Issue Orders to Close Non-essential Businesses; Utility Services to Continue

On Tuesday March 24, 2020, both the City of Portland and the State of Maine issued comprehensive new limitations on business establishments in order to further limit the spread of the coronavirus. Both actions were aimed at limiting the...

March 24, 2020

COVID-19 Alert: Massachusetts Closes “Non-essential” Businesses; Utility Services to Continue

The response to COVID-19 by states across the U.S. has continued to evolve rapidly. In Massachusetts, due to growing concerns over the spread of coronavirus, Governor Charlie Baker issued a “shelter in place” order that went into effect...

March 20, 2020

Maine’s COVID-19 Response Impacts Utility Services and Other Business Activities

Like many states, Maine is quickly imposing a wide range of measures designed to protect the public in response to the spread of the coronavirus, COVID-19. Almost daily, Maine Governor Janet Mills and other state agencies have announced new...

February 27, 2020

Maine PUC Issues Report Analyzing the Costs and Benefits of “Public Power” in Maine

Last week, the Maine PUC submitted to the Maine Legislature its Report ,

authored by London Economics International (LEI), on the costs and benefits of requiring the State of Maine to take over Central Maine Power and Emera Maine...

June 7, 2018

At NECPUC: Takeaways from the Annual Symposium

At the end of May, Verrill Dana attorneys James Cohen , William Harwood , Geoffrey Why , Katie Gray, and Brian Marshall attended the 71 st New England Conference of Public Utilities Commissioners (NECPUC) Annual Symposium at the Cliff...

November 7, 2017

Microgrids: The Next “Big” Thing?

There has been a lot of conversation lately about "microgrids." And, given the significant power outages experienced in Maine and the Northeast this past week due to extreme weather events, these conversations are bound to increase. But, what exactly...

June 23, 2017

Energy Startups: Opportunities, Challenges, & Considerations

In a presentation during Maine Startup & Create Week , Verrill Dana partner Jim Cohen , a utilities and energy lawyer with more than 25 years of experience, moderated a panel focused on the question, " How can tech...

June 20, 2017

How Can Tech Disrupt Energy?

On Wednesday, June 21, as part of Maine Startup & Create Week , Verrill Dana partner Jim Cohen , a utilities and energy lawyer for more than 25 years, will moderate a panel entitled " How Can Tech Disrupt...

July 28, 2016

Verrill Dana Hosts E2Tech Networking Event

On Tuesday, July 26, more than a hundred professionals gathered outside in Verrill Dana's courtyard in Portland, Maine for the E2Tech Summer Networking Reception . Attendees included numerous area businesses, government officials, professionals, and non-profit leaders from across the...