

John Estes

Partner

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Areas of Focus

Energy



Overview

John Estes has decades of experience solving problems for the electric and natural gas industries. He focuses on disputes at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and in court, sometimes involving multiforum combinations. John has played a lead role in many of the most important and high-value cases tried before a FERC ALJ. He has argued 30 cases before the US Courts of Appeals. And he has led the defense in many prominent and complex FERC enforcement cases, including three that went to federal district court and many others that were resolved without sanction. John has been steeped in organized power markets like PJM, ISO-NE, MISO, and CAISO since the beginning. And he has decades of experience addressing regulatory issues arising in a transactional context.

As noted by *Chambers Global*, John “is the number one choice for high-stakes enforcement work [and] has his finger on the pulse of FERC politics.” He is the only US-based lawyer ranked as a “Star Individual” in the guide’s top tier category for Electricity (Regulatory & Litigation).

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Representative Matters

- Represented a federally owned electric utility corporation in a groundbreaking defense against a petition seeking transmission service.

- Represented an LNG business at FERC and in the DC Circuit regarding a show cause order addressing whether a facility in Puerto Rico qualified as a FERC-jurisdictional LNG terminal.
- Represented a leading power company in two bookend appeals in the Ninth Circuit involving the intersection of FERC's regulatory authority and bankruptcy court jurisdiction.
- Represented many power and gas industry participants, including some of the world's leading financial institutions, in complex FERC enforcement matters, including allegations of market manipulation by power or gas traders as well as a broad range of other compliance issues—particularly in the context of organized power markets.
- Represented various clients regarding creating, entering, and exiting RTOs and other similar power market organizations, including prevailing in two cases that went to trial before a FERC ALJ.
- Represented defendants in four separate FERC ALJ trials with over \$10 billion at stake in litigation flowing from the Western Power Crisis of 2000-2001 that lasted over a decade.
- Represented many generators regarding capacity markets, including many bitterly fought disputes involving the ISO-NE and PJM capacity markets—one at trial before a FERC ALJ and several on appeal.
- Handled cases at FERC and on appeal involving pipeline certificate and rate issues.

Credentials

Admissions

- District of Columbia

Education

- Louisiana State University, JD, 1983
- Tulane University, BA, 1979

Court Admissions

- US Court of Appeals, First Circuit
- US Court of Appeals, Third Circuit
- US Court of Appeals, Fourth Circuit
- US Court of Appeals, Fifth Circuit
- US Court of Appeals, Sixth Circuit
- US Court of Appeals, Ninth Circuit
- US Court of Appeals, Tenth Circuit
- US Court of Appeals, District of Columbia Circuit

Service / Recognition

Awards

- *The Best Lawyers in America*, Energy Law, Energy Regulatory Law, 2024, 2026
- Capital Pro Bono Honor Roll, 2025; High Honor Roll, 2024
- *Chambers Global*, Energy: Electricity (Regulatory & Litigation), 2003-2004, 2006-2024; Star Individual, 2023-2024
- *Chambers USA*, Energy: Electricity (Regulatory & Litigation), 2003-2026; Star Individual, 2023-2026
- *Washington, DC Super Lawyers*, 2007-2023

Community

- Washington Ballet, Director, including serving on the Executive Board during the first stages of the COVID-19 pandemic

Industry

- FERC Trial Attorney, primarily representing FERC in the United States Courts of Appeals, 1983-1988