

John F. Shea

Counsel

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With over 46 years of experience in environmental and land use law, John is recognized as a master strategist in securing approvals for complex and controversial projects, developing environmental compliance plans for pro-active and troubled companies, and successfully defending permits and enforcement actions in administrative and court appeals.

John focuses his practice on wetlands, water (clean, stormwater, wastewater), and hazardous waste laws. He represents developers, businesses and high net worth individuals in permitting, siting, enforcement defense and litigation. His development projects include coastal homes, subdivisions, subsidized housing, hotels, assisted living facilities, hospitals, colleges, and banks. He handles local, state and federal permitting of and litigation on coastal erosion protection measures, piers and docks, marinas, yacht and boat clubs, aquaculture farms, radio antenna arrays, solar and wind renewable energy facilities, industrial plants, office parks, and retail complexes. He also works on Brownfields redevelopment projects. John represents municipalities in review of permit applications, in enforcement of permits and land use laws, and in related litigation.

John represents public water suppliers and wastewater treatment facilities in permitting, NPDES appeals, supervising compliance teams in enforcement cases, and developing water supply and watershed protection strategies. He represents industrial and commercial businesses and residential developers in permitting and enforcement defense of water withdrawals, and wastewater and stormwater discharges.

John represents landowners and commercial marinas on Chapter 91 permitting and enforcement for pier, dock, and float projects. He worked for waterfront landowners to permit piers and docks on Nantucket, in most Cape Cod municipalities, in Westport, Dartmouth, Plymouth, Hingham, Gloucester, and Weymouth, and for properties on Great Ponds in Winchester, Stow, and Webster. He has worked for commercial marinas on Nantucket, in Plymouth, Barnstable, Falmouth, and Boston. He obtained Chapter 91 approvals for Boston Duck Tours, Boston Harbor summer events, a shellfish aquafarm, and power and

Services/Industries

- Environmental & Land Use
- Real Estate

communication cables.

John represents potentially responsible parties (PRPs) in federal and state Superfund cases, and in related cost recovery and insurance claims. He supervised cleanups of water supplies, neighborhoods, commercial, industrial, and military properties throughout the U.S. He served as Common and Investigatory Counsel to PRPs, and represented environmental engineering and remediation companies in contract negotiations and litigation. He was founding chair of the Boston Bar Association Hazardous Waste Committee. John is the author of "Hazardous Waste Cleanup Law" in the Massachusetts Environmental Law treatise published by MCLE.

John acts as a Hearing Officer to Boards of Health on-site assignment applications by solid waste and hazardous waste management facilities. He conducted more than 45 public hearings on landfill expansions, processing and recycling facilities, and transfer stations. John has represented solid waste companies on landfill, transfer station and waste-to-energy plant modifications and enforcement defense. He was founding chair of the BBA Solid Waste Committee and the Recycling Task Force. John chairs and lectures at professional programs to fellow lawyers, engineers, and business groups on Environmental & Real Estate and Space Law.

From 1976 through 1981, John served as a Judge Advocate in the U.S. Air Force with responsibility for environmental compliance, litigation in federal and foreign courts, environmental audits, and Superfund cleanups at disposal sites and military installations.

John is a serious student of astronomy, astrophysics, exobiology, and cosmology. He is a voracious reader of science fiction, history, and baseball. He is a Red Sox and Celtics fan, and enjoys freshwater fishing, Foreigner, The Traveling Wilburys, Robert Plant, Celine, and Andrea Bocelli. John is a caregiver, and loves spending time with his three grandchildren.

Education

- University of Maine School of Law (J.D.)
- Vermont Law School (LL.M., *cum laude*)
 - Masters in Environmental Law
- Holy Cross College (B.S., *cum laude*)

Bar Admissions

- Massachusetts
- Maine

Memberships

- Massachusetts Water Works Association
- New England Water Works Association
- The Planetary Society
- The Mars Society

- The National Space Society

Honors

- Lawdragon Green 500: Leaders in Environmental Law (2024)
- Massachusetts Water Works Association, William H. McGinnis Award (2022)
- Chambers USA, Band 2 Massachusetts Environmental Law
- *Best Lawyers in America* Best Lawyer, Environmental Law (2008-2025)
- *Best Lawyers*, Litigation - Environmental (2025)
- *Best Lawyers in America* Boston Environmental Law "Lawyer of the Year" (2013)
- *Best Lawyers in America*, Best Environmental Lawyers in New England (2013)
- Massachusetts and New England Super Lawyers (2004-2024)
- Martindale-Hubbell, AV Pre-eminent Lawyer

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

Court and Other Admissions

- Massachusetts Federal Courts
- U.S. Supreme Court
- Courts of Japan