

Bracewell Adds Renewables Partner From Sidley

By **Keith Goldberg**

Law360 (March 16, 2020, 8:43 PM EDT) -- Bracewell LLP has boosted its renewable energy practice by bringing aboard a former Sidley Austin LLP counsel who represents commodity traders, hedge funds and other financial industry players in the development and operation of wind, solar and energy storage projects.

Danielle Garbien joined Bracewell as a partner in the firm's New York office on March 6 after spending three years at Sidley. She works on financing wind and solar project development through structuring hedges, as well as crafting agreements to purchase the electricity produced by those projects and long-term credit facilities for wholesale and retail power contracts.



Danielle Garbien

Garbien, who also spent time at Cadwalader Wickersham & Taft LLP and McDermott Will & Emery LLP, didn't necessarily plan for a legal career in the energy sector. But her first job out of law school placed her squarely within one of the biggest energy market events in years: the 2001 collapse of energy and commodity trading giant Enron amid a massive accounting fraud.

As a first-year associate at Dickstein Shapiro LLP, which was representing Duke Energy Corp., Garbien said she spent much of her time listening to energy trader tapes.

"It gave me a great bootcamp for learning the energy market," Garbien told Law360.

Garbien's main clients are financial sector players: commodity trading firms, large institutions, hedge funds and private equity firms. She said several of her recent deals have been representing clients as offtakers of a renewable project's electricity; power purchase agreements are crucial to whether a project can attract enough investment to be built.

"It's satisfying to see a wind or solar facility be built from the ground up," Garbien said.

But Garbien said her clients are branching out into other areas of the clean energy sector, most notably energy storage, given its ability to be paired with solar projects. She also sees more clean energy development activity taking place on a decentralized basis as opposed to just for power plant construction. Examples of such development include office buildings with parking garages wired with vehicle charging infrastructure that also send battery power back to the larger grid.

"I think we're going to see renewables in different sectors of the energy market that we haven't seen before," Garbien said. "There's just more components as to how renewable energy is used."

Garbien said Bracewell's comprehensive energy practice makes the firm an ideal place for her to guide her clients through these changes within the renewable energy space.

"The focus is on energy at the firm," Garbien said. "It was a good fit for the client work that I was doing."

Bracewell said Garbien is the seventh lateral partner that's joined the firm's global energy practice in the past eight months.

"The renewable energy market is evolving rapidly," G. Alan Rafte, who chairs Bracewell's business and regulatory section, said in a statement. "Danielle's experience advising on commodity trades deepens the offering of our power team and strengthens our ability to help clients respond to market trends, especially with respect to solar and wind projects."

--Editing by Nicole Bleier.