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AGRICULTURAL, ENVIRONMENTAL, AND NATURAL RESOURCES PROTECTION

JANUARY 17TH 2025 BY DEE LOFLIN

AGRICULTURAL, ENVIRONMENTAL, AND NATURAL RESOURCES PROTECTION

The ShowMe Times is offering a new series of informational articles from A-Z on many topics including Abuse and Neglect of the Elderly, Human Trafficking, Health and Wellness and many more topics. We need to stay educated and keep learning as we grow in life. Knowledge is the key to success!

What exactly is the Environmental Protection and the Attorney General's Office?

The **Governmental Affairs Section** aggressively protects Missouri's natural resources. Attorneys take legal action to stop pollution of the state's air, water and soil through injunctions, fines, penalties and in the most serious cases, incarceration.

Attorneys represent the Department of Natural Resources and its constituent boards and commissions that regulate the use of the state's air, land and waters. The section is responsible for over 400 active enforcement cases, including administrative appeals before the DNR's commissions.

Enforcement litigation is filed primarily in state courts to seek preliminary and permanent injunctions to ensure compliance with Missouri's environmental laws.

The section obtains civil penalties for the state and recovers costs and damages for the DNR. Since 2008, the division has obtained over \$6 million in civil penalty judgments.

What Does the Governmental Affairs Section Do?

The Governmental Affairs Section's mission and objectives are to:

- defend Missouri's Constitution, statutes, and state agencies, through representing the State of Missouri in a wide variety of legal proceedings;
- protect Missouri's public safety, vulnerable populations, and natural resources, through initiating enforcement actions against licensed professionals, registered entities, and others that violate their legal obligations and do harm to Missourians; and
- promote local governmental transparency through enforcing Missouri's Sunshine Law and providing public education and training.

Attorneys in the Section serve as litigation counsel to the State of Missouri and its state agencies, boards, and commissions, as well as provide outside general counsel and advisory services to many of those same bodies. The Section has over 50 state executive, legislative, and judicial clients. Attorneys practice in both state and federal trial and appellate courts, as well as in state administrative tribunals.

The Section's attorneys are able to engage with a wide variety of matters as appropriate to their skills and experiences. This includes almost any type of legal claim that does not contain a request for monetary damages against the State. The Section's most common legal areas include constitutional law; statutory interpretation; administrative law; professional licensure discipline against those who do not adhere to state laws and disciplinary rules, including police officers, educators, and real estate agents; election law, campaign finance, and ballot initiatives; Sunshine Law enforcement and education; environmental and natural resources law; government contracts; criminal records expungements; social services and mental health work, including guardianships, abuse and neglect issues, and eligibility for services; and animal welfare and cruelty issues to shut down facilities providing substandard or inhumane conditions.

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