

Joan M. Bondareff | Senior Counsel

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Joan Bondareff focuses her practice on marine transportation, environmental, regulatory, renewable energy, and legislative issues. Joan represents clients in many industries and state and local governments in matters related to:

- Maritime regulations and public policy
- Environmental law
- Government relations
- Renewable energy
- Federal grants
- Maritime security for shipyards and ports

Before joining Blank Rome, Joan was chief counsel and acting deputy administrator of the Maritime Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation. She was also former majority counsel for the House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries. Joan served on the Obama Transition Team for the Department of Transportation handling maritime related issues. She worked on the OPA 90 legislation, and also helped develop the Natural Resource Damage Assessment regulations when she was the assistant general counsel for Ocean Services at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Outside The Firm

- Chair, Virginia Offshore Wind Development Authority (2016–2022)
- Editorial Board Member, American Bar Association Experience Magazine (2021–2024)
- Member, American Bar Association Voice of Experience Board (2022–2024)

- Member, American Bar Association Center for Excellence in Elder Law and Dementia (2022–2024)
- At Large Vice Chair (2020–2023), Vice Chair of Committee Articles (2019–2020) and Vice Chair of Policy (2018–2019) of the Marine Resources Committee of the American Bar Association Section of Environment, Energy, and Resources
- Board Member, Parent-Leadership Training Institute (“PLTI”) of Alexandria, VA (2012–2017)
- Advisory Committee, Children’s Hospital of Washington, D.C.

Select Engagements

- Advise international maritime client on federal opportunities, including Coast Guard contracts, renewable energy, and health care and represent their interests before Congress.
- Secured federal legislation to authorize exchange of property from federal government to Alaska Native Corporation.
- Advise international maritime coalition on compliance with the Jones Act before Congress and agencies.
- Represent U.S. shipyards to secure government contracts and grants with Congressional support.
- Advise clients on offshore wind regulations and legislation, including the Jones Act and assist clients to secure federal energy grants.
- Advise companies on title XI loan guarantees and grants from the U.S. Maritime Administration.
- Secured title XI loan guarantee and small shipyard grants for U.S. shipyards and other developers.
- Assist clients with obtaining infrastructure grants such as Port Infrastructure and RAISE grants. Represented port coalition for obtaining additional funds for port security.
- Represented a ferry company in environmental matters (“NEPA”) and agency representation.
- Provide legal advice to nonprofits engaged in literacy advocacy and training parents.
- Advise client on how to secure and promote renewable energy credits with virtual power purchase agreement and IRA tax credits.

Admissions

- District of Columbia
- Maryland

Memberships

- American Bar Association
- Bar Association of the District of Columbia
- Maryland Bar Association

- Women's Bar Association

Education

- American University, JD, magna cum laude
- George Washington University, BS

Professional Activities

Joan served for 10 years as General Counsel and Secretary, North American Marine Environmental Protection Association (“NAMEPA”), a nonprofit that promotes sustainable practices for the shipping industry.

Joan is a former member of Women in Government Relations (“WGR”) and served on the Homeland Security and Environment and Energy Task Forces. In September 2014, she was appointed to serve as WGR’s Homeland Security and Defense co-chair. In October 2010, Joan was appointed by Virginia Governor Bob McDonnell to his new Virginia Offshore Wind Development Authority (“VOWDA”). She was reappointed to a new four-year term at VOWDA in December 2013 and again in March 2014. In July 2014, Joan received a certificate of appreciation from the American Bar Association's International Legal Resource Center and the United Nations Development Program for advice she gave to the Republic of Fiji on new mining laws.

In December 2013, Joan was appointed to the Pool of Experts of the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects (commonly referred to as the “Regular Process”). Members of the Pool of Experts are appointed through the United Nations. The task of the first cycle of the Regular Process was to produce the first integrated marine assessment of the world’s oceans and seas by 2014, commonly referred to as the “World Ocean Assessment.” In May 2018, Joan was appointed by the U.S. Department of State as an expert on coastal zone management and planning for the United Nation’s second World Ocean Assessment.

Joan served as chair of the Virginia Offshore Wind Development Authority from 2016 to 2022.

In September 2023, Joan was reappointed as At Large Vice Chair of the Marine Resources Committee of the American Bar Association (“ABA”) Section of Environment, Energy, and Resources for the 2022–2023 term. She has previously served as vice chair of policy and vice chair of committee articles of the committee. In August 2021, Joan has been a member of ABA’s Experience Magazine Editorial Board since 2021.

In January 2021, Joan received a formal letter of appreciation from the United Nations, Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea Office of Legal Affairs,

for her writing contributions to the Second World Ocean Assessment (“WOA II”), which was adopted during the General Assembly’s 75th Session on December 31, 2020, as part of the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects, which covered the period 2016–2020. The WOA II assesses the state of the marine environment, including socioeconomic aspects, and focuses on how to improve the science-policy interface to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean and marine resources. It will be finalized by February/March 2021, and the translation in all the other UN languages is scheduled to be completed around May 2021.

In December 2021, Joan received a letter from Governor Ralph S. Northam on behalf of the Commonwealth of Virginia, expressing his admiration and sincere appreciation for her selfless service, achievements, and contributions to the development of Virginia's offshore wind energy resource.

In 2021, Joan was selected to be an international mentor for Women in Wind and, in January 2023, she was awarded a Certificate of Recognition for her dedicated service as a Mentor during the 2022 edition of the Women in Wind Global Leadership Program.

Joan served as an adjunct professor at Georgetown Law School for the spring 2022 semester teaching renewable energy (January–May 2022).