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TOP 25 CLEAN TECHNOLOGY LAWYERS

Very often, the noisy debate that goes on in this country about how to meet our increasing energy demands centers on whether the nascent clean energy industry will ever be a true power player. Doubters should take a look at the work energy lawyers in California are doing. That's what we decided to do this month in the Daily Journal's first-ever list of top clean tech lawyers. What we found were massive wind and

solar projects under construction that could power cities and other truly innovative ideas that have similar promise. In selecting a list of just 25, we decided to mostly focus on project finance and regulatory lawyers who are shepherding through the largest and most innovative projects. We encourage you to read about these people. Their work will inspire you.

—The Editors

Cross-Border Control Power Player



COURTESY PHOTO

Dino Barajas

Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP
Los Angeles

While many lawyers these days can rely on modern technology to keep in touch with their out-of-town clients, Dino Barajas clocks major mileage every year to put in face time all over the nation. A partner at Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP in Los Angeles, he credits his hectic travel schedule, which he likened to Bon Jovi's touring schedule, as a key factor in closing a high volume of deals.

"It comes with the territory, especially in the renewable energy space," Barajas said. "One of the tricks to getting these deals

done quickly is making yourself available to the developers in their offices, with their deal teams, rolling up your sleeves with them and working on their schedule. It's not a practice area where you can do it by remote control."

In the past year, Barajas has worked on renewable energy developments and mergers and acquisitions transactions worth more than \$1 billion totaled. In one of the most significant efforts on his plate, Barajas represents Polaris Geothermal Inc., in the development and financing of Nicaragua's largest geothermal power plant, the San Jacinto project. The financing for the roughly \$250 million plant involves coordinating with nine multilateral lending institutions and development banks, among other challenges.

"It was ... definitely the largest financing that has been closed to date in that country," Barajas said. "The challenge there is there wasn't a template to utilize. And given that you're bringing in lenders that hadn't had exposure to geothermal as a renewable resource, that posed a challenge."

For the past seven years, the 42-year-old Harvard Law School graduate has had a practice that consists of approximately 50 percent U.S.-based deals, and 50 percent finance and development work in Latin America.

"I guess the one thing that really benefited me and helped me set myself apart was I was bilingual and bi-cultural," Barajas said. "If you're already in a challenging environment and not able to straddle the languages, it's just another hurdle and another delay for these projects to get done."

Besides the San Jacinto project, Barajas also is representing Gas Natural Fenosa in its development of wind farm in Baja, California and the negotiation of a cross-border power purchase agreement with a California electric utility for the sale of all the power generated by the facility. The project is the largest U.S.-Mexico cross border wind facility that has secured a power purchase agreement to date.

Barajas' West Coast practice has set the stage for many of his projects, he said.

"The California market is probably by far the most enticing to developers, and a lot of foreign jurisdictions are looking to the U.S. and trying to gain some lessons, because they've seen such a quick development of the renewable energy sector," Barajas said. "Things working here are being studied and adopted. It's the perfect training ground, because it's given me a leg up as I'm dealing with the same issues in Latin America."

Other recent matters Barajas has been involved in:

- *First Wind Energy LLC's \$376 million financing of the Milford I wind farm project in Utah, the largest construction financing ever of an individual wind farm in the U.S.*
- *Represented Royal Bank of Trinidad and Tobago Merchant Bank Limited in the \$52 million financing of the Atexaco Hydroelectric Power Project in Mexico*
- *Represented Mesoamerica Energy in developing a wind farm in Honduras, which will be Central America's largest wind farm*

—Anna Scott