



David M. Uhlmann

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David M. Uhlmann is a partner in the Washington, D.C. office of Marten Law. Uhlmann brings more than three decades of incomparable leadership experience solving some of the Nation's most prominent and challenging environmental enforcement issues. Uhlmann served as EPA Assistant Administrator for Enforcement and Compliance Assurance—the top enforcement official in the United States—under President Joseph R. Biden. He is an internationally recognized expert on environmental law and a leading authority on environmental crimes.

At Marten Law, Uhlmann represents state and local governments in their efforts to address climate change and exposure to PFAS and other emerging contaminants; renewable energy companies, utilities, and trade associations in the clean energy space; and corporate clients seeking strategic counsel regarding values-driven solutions to environmental challenges and enhanced ethics, integrity, and compliance programs.

Uhlmann served as the EPA Assistant Administrator for Enforcement and Compliance Assurance from July 2023 until December 2024 and as the Deputy Assistant Administrator and a Senior Advisor to the Administrator from September 2022 to July 2023, while awaiting Senate confirmation as Assistant Administrator. In those roles, Uhlmann led approximately 2,800 EPA employees nationwide responsible for enforcement and compliance assurance activities under the federal environmental laws. He revitalized EPA enforcement after more than a decade of declining budgets, securing the first budget increases since 2010, creating more than 300 new positions, and dramatically increasing enforcement across all metrics.



Uhlmann developed National Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Initiatives for 2024-2027, including mitigating climate change and addressing PFAS contamination, and developed innovative strategies to enhance civil-criminal coordination, streamline resolution of complex environmental matters, and promote greater transparency about how EPA exercises its PFAS enforcement discretion. He led a novel, solutions-oriented approach to the Norfolk Southern litigation, which was concluded within 16 months of the derailment in East Palestine, Ohio. He supervised the largest stationary source and mobile source cases ever brought under the Clean Air Act and revitalized EPA enforcement after more than a decade of declining budgets.

Prior to his appointment at EPA, Uhlmann was the Jeffrey F. Liss Professor from Practice and the Director of the Environmental Law and Policy Program at the University of Michigan from 2007 to 2022. His research and advocacy interests included criminal and civil enforcement of the environmental laws, corporate accountability, and climate change and sustainability. Uhlmann testified before Congress about the use of environmental protections to address shortcomings in worker safety laws and redressing environmental harm in corporate settlements. He lectured widely about corporate crime and the exercise of prosecutorial discretion in cases involving corporate wrongdoing. Uhlmann's views on corporate accountability for the Gulf oil spill and the VW diesel scandal, the urgency of climate disruption, and the need to promote a sustainable future have been published in the New York Times, The Atlantic, the American Constitution Society's Issue Briefs series, and numerous top law reviews.

As a law professor, Uhlmann also served as Counselor to the Compliance Monitor and Independent Auditor appointed by the Justice Department and EPA in the wake of the Volkswagen diesel scandal. He served in that role for 3½ years, advising the monitor regarding the underlying misconduct at Volkswagen and corporate environmental compliance and making more than 20 presentations to the Volkswagen and Audi boards regarding environmental law in the United States, corporate accountability, and promoting environmental stewardship and an ethical culture. Uhlmann also advised investors regarding how to assess environmental liabilities in some of the most high-profile matters ever brought under the environmental laws, including the Gulf oil spill, the Anadarko-Tronox litigation, and the VW diesel scandal, and testified as an expert witness on numerous environmental enforcement topics.



Uhlmann served from 1990 to 2007 at the U.S. Department of Justice, the last seven years as chief of the Environmental Crimes Section, where he was the top environmental crimes prosecutor in the country. He led prosecution of environmental and wildlife crimes nationwide, coordinated national legislative, policy, and training initiatives regarding criminal enforcement, and chaired the Justice Department's Environmental Crimes Policy Committee. His work as lead prosecutor in United States v. Elias, a knowing endangerment case that left a 20-year-old worker severely and permanently brain-damaged, is chronicled in he Cyanide Canary. He received numerous Justice Department and EPA awards for his precedent-setting prosecutions, including the first environmental justice criminal trial.

Uhlmann is a fellow in the American College of Environmental Lawyers and a past member of their Board of Regents. He was named a "Conservation Hero" by the Michigan League of Conservation Voters and selected by the University of Michigan to be a Distinguished Faculty Fellow in Sustainability. Uhlmann received a J.D. from Yale Law School and a B.A. in history and political science with high honors from Swarthmore College. Following law school, he clerked for U.S. District Court Judge Marvin H. Shoob in Atlanta, Georgia.

