

Avi Garbow

Accomplished senior leader in government, non-profits, and the corporate sector with decades of experience developing and implementing solutions that protect people and nature.

- › Motivational leader of mission-driven multi-disciplinary teams.
- › Proven and highly-effective legal and policy strategist.
- › Coalition-builder with extensive professional network in government, nonprofits, philanthropy, private sector, and frontline community organizations.
- › Persuasive communicator and frequent public speaker.
- › Expert in environmental regulatory development and analysis.
- › Significant fundraising and organizational development experience.



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📍 Arlington, Virginia

Experience

July 2025-Present

Founder

Fiery Run Environmental Strategies

Advise non-profit organizations, progressive companies, and foundations seeking to develop, optimize, and implement effective strategies for environmental protection and climate-positive impact.

2022 – 2024 (November)

President

Resources Legacy Fund Fund For A Better Future Shared Ascent Fund

Provided executive leadership and vision in designing, directing, and implementing initiatives, campaigns, and programs that advance a just and resilient future for people and the planet. The affiliated organizations effectively utilized intersectional strategies and multi-disciplinary experts, in partnership with frontline community groups, to deliver outcomes in issue areas including climate and energy, biodiversity and conservation, environmental justice and equity, and healthy and resilient communities. Served as fiscal sponsor for over twenty highly-impactful and mission-aligned projects with regional, national, and international focus.

Significant achievements include:

- › Helped develop legislative strategy, build broad coalition, and lead advocacy campaign to pass historic \$10 billion California bond supporting clean water, wildfire prevention, and climate adaptation measures.
- › Partnered with and supported Indigenous organizations to yield agreement on Northwest Territories (Canada) Project Finance for Permanence initiative to durably protect vast tracts of Boreal forest, wetlands, and wildlife habitat.
- › Created “Environmental Justice Ready” program to assist grassroots organizations seeking federal, state, and philanthropic funding to support healthy communities.
- › Led organizational strategic planning process to increase programmatic impact and scope.
- › Successfully developed legislative and coalition strategies for the creation and expansion of public land designations.

January – June 2021

*Senior Counselor to the
Administrator*

**U.S. Environmental
Protection Agency**

(Temporary Leave From Patagonia)

Counseled incoming Administrator and political leadership on all significant EPA-related issues arising in the first six months of the Biden-Harris Administration, including extensive time-critical litigation strategies and directives to halt and reverse damaging policy and regulatory actions undertaken by the previous Administration. Worked closely with political and career leadership and staff to develop and implement Administration priorities, including significant early actions on integrated fossil fuel-related regulatory strategies, clean water regulations, a comprehensive and multi-statute PFAS strategy, and support for environmental justice and external civil rights.

2019 – 2022

Environmental Advocate

Patagonia Works

Provided strategic leadership on global environmental policies to international apparel and food businesses, and to sustainable company startup investor, with active portfolio of environmental and conservation issue activism. Represented Patagonia on several business-oriented climate action coalitions and served as key spokesperson on issues ranging from climate change, agriculture and land use policies, marine pollution, and sustainable business operations.

2017 – 2019

*Partner and Co-Chair of Global
Environmental Practice*

Gibson Dunn & Crutcher

Represented domestic and international clients in wide-ranging environmental law and policy practice. Frequent speaker at business forums on issues regarding climate strategies, sustainability, Environmental, Social and Governance standards, and federal and state environmental laws and policies.

2009 – 2017

*General Counsel and
Deputy General Counsel*

**U.S. Environmental
Protection Agency**

Confirmed by unanimous consent of the U.S. Senate, served as chief legal advisor to the Agency and its senior leadership and became the longest-serving General Counsel in EPA history. Prior to confirmation served as the Agency's Deputy General Counsel. Provided legal and policy counsel for the full range of Agency actions, including the development of regulations, guidances, and policies under every major environmental statute, and for matters concerning personnel, Congressional oversight, budgets, and other operational concerns. Managed broad litigation docket to successfully defend key Administration regulatory priorities.

Significant responsibilities and achievements included:

- › Served as a key legal architect of major elements of President Obama's Climate Action Plan. Led EPA delegation to the U.S.-China Strategic & Economic Dialogue in Beijing in 2014 and 2016, participated in the U.S. China Climate Change Working Group, and led Agency engagements with environmental ministries in China and Vietnam.
- › Held first-ever General Counsel forum at the National Congress of American Indians and led ground-breaking EPA efforts to address treaty rights in decisions impacting fisheries and land use.
- › Led the Office of General Counsel to its first-ever recognition by The Legal500 as Best Team – Environment in 2014 and 2015, and achieved the Agency's most highly-rated employee satisfaction survey results while maintaining superior performance.
- › Initiated unprecedented external Office of General Counsel engagement with Agency stakeholders including effective outreach to state Attorneys General, State environmental commissioners, environmental non-profits, and private sector environmental law leaders.

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2005 — 2009

Partner

Cohen Milstein Sellers & Toll

Represented public and private clients in a litigation-intensive law practice and served as Co-Chair of the firm's international human rights practice. Helped to lead litigation team in the resolution of class actions involving the groundbreaking use of courts in The Netherlands to settle international class claims. Promoted from Counsel position in 2006.

2002 — 2005

Junior Partner

Wilmerhale

Represented corporate and individual clients in wide range of matters in litigation, including environmental, antitrust, securities, intellectual property, and contracts disputes. Conducted internal investigations concerning allegations of financial and other misconduct. Promoted from Associate position in 2004.

1996 — 2002

Trial Attorney

**Environmental Crimes Section,
and Wildlife and Marine
Resources Section,
U.S. Department of Justice**

Prosecuted environmental crimes under most major environmental and federal fraud statutes in jurisdictions around the country. Active grand jury and investigative practice, and first-chair trial experience. Received repeated recognition from the Department of Justice for superior performance, and served as an instructor at the Department's National Advocacy Center. Significant experience in representing federal agencies, including the Department of the Interior and the Department of Commerce, on matters involving the Endangered Species Act and marine protection statutes.

1992 — 1996

Attorney/Advisor

**Office of Enforcement and
Compliance Assurance,
U.S. Environmental
Protection Agency**

Analyzed enforcement referrals for civil litigation arising predominantly under the Clean Water Act and the Safe Drinking Water Act. Advised regional attorneys and national program offices on implementation and enforcement of those statutes, and assisted Agency task forces responsible for both the reorganization of the Agency's regional enforcement components and the establishment of the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance. Served on the first enforcement task force on environmental justice.

Education

May 1993

Master of Arts, Marine Affairs

**University of Virginia
Graduate School of
Arts & Sciences**

May 1992

Juris Doctor

**University of Virginia
School of Law**

May 1988

Bachelor of Arts,

Magna Cum Laude

University of Michigan



Board Service

Crystal Cove Conservancy (*current*) – California coastal state park conservancy dedicated to marine conservation, climate action, environmental education, and community engagement.

Rare (*past*) – International conservation organization with emphasis on sustainable fisheries, regenerative agriculture, the climate crisis, and behavioral changes for environmental outcomes.

Organic Trade Association (*past*) – Trade association representing thousands of organic businesses, farmers, and ranchers throughout the agriculture and food value chain.

Articles

[As Climate Change Batters California, Wealthy Philanthropists Could Do More](#)
Sacramento Bee • *November 15, 2023*

[Moving from Environmental Justice to Outcomes](#)

Big Easy Magazine • *August 21, 2023*

[Civil rights enforcement can help end environmental racism](#)

TheHill.com • *November 14, 2020*

[Trump Administration is Rushing to Gut Environmental Protections](#)

CNN • *April 10, 2020*

[Clean Water Act protects essential benefits and it must not be weakened](#)

TheHill.com • *February 22, 2020*

[Trump is rolling back our protections – but there is time to undo the damage](#)

TheHill.com • *May 16, 2019*

Podcasts

[RENEW Energy Partners, Green Beer Podcast](#)

Decarbonization Dialogues • *January 4, 2024*

[The Lookfar Podcast: Voices from the Wild](#)

Advocating for the Earth • *September 14, 2021*

[Food Tank, Food Talk Live](#)

Organic Agriculture and Climate Change • *October 5, 2020*

[Environmental Law Institute, People Places Planet Podcast](#)

The General Counsel's Opinions • *October 23, 2019*

Recognitions

American College of Environmental Lawyers • *Fellow*

National Law Journal • *Energy and Environmental Trailblazer*

Legal500 • *GC Powerlist*

Robert F. Kennedy Award for Public Service

U.S. Department of Justice, Sustained Superior Performance Award