

## Freeborn & Peters Nabs Clark Hill Energy Pro In Chicago

By **Adam Lidgett**

Law360 (June 29, 2018, 5:42 PM EDT) -- Freeborn & Peters LLP has added a former Clark Hill PLC energy attorney as a partner in its Chicago office, where he will co-lead the firm's environment and energy practice group.

Christopher J. Townsend brings more than 20 years of experience in energy law to Freeborn & Peters, the firm said in its June 25 announcement, adding that he has appeared in proceedings before the Illinois Commerce Commission and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Townsend told Law360 on Friday that his new firm was very welcoming and that it shares his approach when it comes to clients.



Christopher Townsend

"Freeborn & Peters at its core is trying to help its clients position themselves for the future," Townsend said. "The motto of the firm is 'your future is our purpose,' and that's the way in which I have always approached the energy industry: to try not to only look at what is currently going on but to try to anticipate what the next changes are."

Townsend said he represents a number of the largest energy users in northern Illinois, both individually and as coalitions, and helps them address issues ranging from utility rate making and rate design to preparing for what he said was the upcoming redefinition of "the utility of the future."

By that, Townsend said he meant the redefined way in which utilities interact with their customers, as customers become more engaged with the production of electricity as well as managing their consumption in order to be able to assist with the operation of the grid.

He said he represents large energy users, developers of infrastructure projects, alternative energy suppliers as well as municipalities and banks.

"The only thing that's assured in the energy world is the landscape of today is not going to be the same as the landscape of tomorrow, and being able to influence the way the landscape changes has been a fascinating experience," Townsend said.

Townsend had been at Clark Hill for just over two years, he said, where he was a partner. Prior to that, he was at Quarles & Brady LLP for about four years, and he spent 14 years at DLA Piper before that.

He had been at Chapman and Cutler LLP before that, after which he joined Rudnick & Wolfe, which eventually grew into DLA Piper, he said.

"This is the exact right time for Chris to be joining the firm," Philip L. Comella, a Freeborn partner and co-leader of the environment and energy practice group, said in a statement. "Environmental and energy law and policy continue to converge at an increasing pace, with clients looking for creative but practical ways to address emerging technologies, shifting energy markets, and constantly evolving laws and regulations."

--Editing by Aaron Pelc.