

## Energy Group Of The Year: Orrick

By **Keith Goldberg**

*Law360 (February 23, 2026, 4:00 PM EST)* -- Orrick Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP attorneys shepherded several lucrative clean energy deals to completion and convinced the D.C. Circuit to undo its stoppage of an \$18 billion liquefied natural gas project, earning the firm a place among the 2025 Law360 Energy Groups of the Year.

Orrick boasts 188 attorneys in its energy and infrastructure practice, spread across 16 offices in the United States, Europe and Asia. It's one of four core industry sectors for the firm, along with technology, finance and life sciences.

Kyle Drefke, the co-leader of the energy and infrastructure practice, said the firm's capabilities are ideally suited to handle the increased overlap between energy development and technology development due to the global energy transition.

"Our chairman is fond of saying that ... we are the best technology practice that also has top-tier energy capability," Drefke said. "And vice versa is true. We are the best energy practice accompanied by the best tech practice, in a way that the combination of those two, you don't have to go very far before you see the ways in which those create tremendous opportunities."

An example of Orrick leveraging its energy and technology expertise was its representation of clean energy developer and longtime client Intersect Power LLC in a partnership with Google LLC and a climate-focused arm of private equity shop TPG to invest \$20 billion in renewable power infrastructure that would be colocated with the tech giant's data centers by the end of the decade.

The partnership kicked off in December 2024 with an \$800 million equity investment from Google, TPG and two other infrastructure firms. Google has since bought out Intersect Power.

"Our platform was really built ... around disrupting the intersection of energy and technology, and that's where we really see our sweet spot," said Teresa Hill, who co-leads Orrick's energy and infrastructure sector.

The Intersect Power deal, Hill said, "highlights that really Google's goal here was a pathway to building data centers faster, and to do that, they really needed to be able to accelerate the development of energy resources to serve that load."



Orrick also represented BP PLC in the July 2025 sale of its U.S. onshore wind business to LS Power Development LLC as part of the oil giant's plan to divest at least \$20 billion worth of assets by 2026.

Brad Gathright, who represented BP in the deal, helped guide the company as it built up its portfolio of wind projects over the past decade-plus. Gathright said that relationship gave Orrick an understanding of those projects that allowed the firm to avoid potential dealmaking potholes.

"Similar to the Intersect deal ... we as a platform, we cover the projects that we work on from the beginning to the end," Gathright said. "We understand the development process, construction, regulatory issues, offtake, finance, litigation. All of that stuff rolls up into an M&A practice that understands these projects on a holistic basis."

Orrick's energy accomplishments aren't limited to the corporate boardroom. The firm scored a major courtroom victory in March 2025 when it convinced a D.C. Circuit panel to undo its August 2024 vacatur of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's reauthorization of the \$18 billion Rio Grande LNG project.

The appeals court panel originally said the problems in FERC's environmental analysis of the Rio Grande project were significant enough to scrap the reauthorization entirely. However, the panel in March gave FERC another chance to fix the deficiencies, saying they weren't as "fundamental" as others in which approvals were outright vacated. The panel also said the Rio Grande project was far enough along in its development that scrapping the approval altogether would cause significant disruption.

Bob Loeb, a partner in Orrick's U.S. Supreme Court and appellate practice, represented Rio Grande developer NextDecade in its October 2024 petition to rehear the D.C. Circuit's original ruling. He noted that the company also submitted an amicus brief to the U.S. Supreme Court as it mulled the scope of federal environmental reviews of infrastructure projects in *Seven County Infrastructure Coalition v. Eagle County*.

The high court issued its *Seven County* decision in May 2025. In curtailing federal environmental reviews of projects, the justices noted NextDecade's argument that the D.C. Circuit's standard for disrupting a project authorization was too low, according to Loeb.

"So, this case not only had ramifications for NextDecade and saving its company and all those jobs and investors, and the European Union who needs the gas, but also [had] major implications for all infrastructure projects going forward facing these kinds of environmental challenges," Loeb said.

Drefke said growing global demand for energy is going to drive new development in all forms, and Orrick has positioned itself to help clients get a piece of that growing development pie. He said the firm has brought aboard 15 partners to its energy and infrastructure practice over the past year and is looking to achieve similar growth over the next year.

"I'm 56 years old, and I don't think I'm ever going to have to worry about whether I'm going to have enough to do," Drefke said. "We think that the trends are going to be applicable in most parts of the world, and I think we're really well set up for that."

--Additional reporting by Jade Martinez-Pogue, Dawood Fakhir and Jared Foretek. Editing by Kristen Becker. All Content © 2003-2026, Portfolio Media, Inc.