

# Daily Journal

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## Top 20 Under 40



### Jeffrey B. Greenberg, 39

Latham & Watkins  
Los Angeles  
Practice: Project finance

One might say Jeffrey B. Greenberg's legal muscle is powered by solar, wind and every other conceivable source of renewable energy.

Specializing in finance for clean-tech projects requires him to balance the needs of consumers, the environment and corporate benchmarks, he said.

"I went into project finance because every project is different, and being able to spend time to really understand the project is really interesting," he said. "It's not cookie cutter."

In 2010, Greenberg represented ING Capital and Union Bank of California in a financing transaction for landfill projects in which garbage-produced methane gas is converted to electricity.

"It's the ultimate sense of renewables," he said with a laugh.

After graduating from Northwestern University School of Law in 1996, Greenberg joined Latham & Watkins as a summer associate. His first assignment was advising Southern California Edison in its disposition of a number of power plants.

"It was at the time of deregulation of the power industry," he said. "I just saw opportunity there around a really interesting space."

Following opportunity and the changing needs of his clients — half of which are financial institutions — helped him carve a niche in the energy industry during the capital-constrained recession.

"The renewable [projects] have been about opportunities and necessity," he said. "That's where the deal flow is."

Government subsidies have helped motivate an equity shift from coal- and gas-fired plants to alternative energy, he said.

In one of Greenberg's favorite deals of the year, he worked with Union Bank of California on a \$149 million construction loan for the Piedmont biomass power plant in Georgia. He integrated funding from a federal renewable-energy cash grant program that pays for 30 percent of a project's capital costs.

"That was really exciting," he said. "It had so many different moving pieces and legal challenges that it was great."

Mass renewable energy production remains in its infancy and will grow exponentially when consumer prices, power supply reliability and environmental goals pass the pocketbook test, according to Greenberg.

"If you're a developer and have people willing to buy energy from a project at a price that is economical and where you can make a good return on investment, why not?"

Latham named Greenberg partner in 2004, and his colleagues elected him to the firm's executive committee last March. That has given him an active role in shaping what he calls a \$2 billion business.

"It's been a wonderful learning experience," Greenberg said. "For the more senior partners on the committee, it is a learning experience to get input from younger partners of where they want the firm to go."

In his executive position, he has mentored young attorneys.

When choosing a particular practice, he cautions to look beyond hot trends and consider budding areas. Also, it still is possible to become partner at your first firm, the one-firm lawyer said.

His advice to newcomers is simple: "Do a good job, work hard and always look out for where the opportunities are and where the future's going."

— Carla Pineda