

MVP: King & Spalding's Scott Greer

By Emma Cueto

Law360 (September 7, 2022, 3:03 PM EDT) -- Scott Greer of King & Spalding LLP's energy and construction transactional practices worked with Cheniere Energy Inc. on a \$5.4 billion contract for the procurement and construction of a liquefied natural gas facility, and steered a number of innovative and first-of-their kind projects, including a commercial-scale carbon-capture project and a high-voltage line delivering hydroelectric power to New York City, earning him a spot as one of Law360's Energy MVPs.

HIS BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT IN THE PAST YEAR:

Greer has worked on multiple projects he considers important accomplishments, including projects focused on shipping liquefied natural gas to Europe to make up for the shortfall created when Russia began reducing supply to European markets amid the war in Ukraine.

Overall, however, he said his biggest accomplishment is his team's ability to move beyond its traditional work on fossil fuel projects and into projects involving new and emerging technologies. These include not only sustainable energy sources, but also things such as carbon capture and lithium production.

For instance, Greer represents Occidental Petroleum Corp. in its planned direct air capture project, which promises to be the first commercial-scale project of its kind. The facility, which will be located in the Southwest, will pull carbon dioxide directly from the air. The project also is scheduled to be the first of many such ventures from Occidental.

In another matter, Greer advised EnergySource Minerals on a commercial-scale project to extract lithium from brine in California. The project was given the green light by Imperial County, California, in November 2021, with EnergySource touting it as a promising step in being able to supply the lithium needed for electric vehicle batteries.

These sorts of projects are part of a new and exciting direction for the team, Greer said.



"There are all these projects that have not been done before," he said. "And I think we're very well-suited to do that because not only do we do these construction contracts, but most of us are former engineers so we understand ... the technology and how to piece it all together."

ON HIS BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN THE PAST YEAR:

"Probably the most challenging thing is taking some of these new types of projects and getting them in a structure that is financeable," Greer said. "The contractors are more sensitive about taking on the risks and obviously the banks don't like to take risks. [It's about] getting it done in a way that works."

That can involve a lot of creativity, he said. The team is often brought into the process early on, which allows them to use their expertise to shape the project, from counseling clients on the best contract structure to advising on the best type of contractor, which he said often pays off.

ON WHAT HE'S MOST PROUD OF IN THE PAST YEAR:

Greer said he's proud of many of the projects he worked on this year, but the one that stands out is the Champlain Hudson Power Express project, which will deliver hydroelectric power from Canada to New York City. Handled by Transmission Developers Inc., a Blackstone Group LP company, the project will rely on high-voltage direct current lines rather than the traditional alternating current lines and is the first project of its kind in the United States, according to the firm.

"I think there's going to be more of those," he said. "It's been a challenging project but a fun project. And this one project will be essentially the equivalent of removing 28% of the cars from New York City's streets."

ON WHY HE'S AN ENERGY ATTORNEY:

Greer said he never expected to wind up as an attorney handling energy transactions. He started out as an architectural engineer and developed an appreciation for the law by working with lawyers during his time as a consultant. When he went to law school, he planned to do construction litigation, but after joining King & Spalding, he saw a need for advising developers and owners on large energy projects.

"I would not have thought I'd be doing what I'm doing, but it's a really good combination of the skill sets I've developed over time," he said.

HIS ADVICE FOR JUNIOR ATTORNEYS:

Greer said he recommends young attorneys with a technical background — or who tend to think technically — to explore work on energy projects, especially if they also enjoy negotiation.

"If you enjoy those things, this is a great field," he said.

— *As told to Emma Cueto*

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