

## MoFo Snags Top DOT Lawyer To Head Transpo Group

By Adam Lidgett

*Law360, New York (September 12, 2016, 6:58 PM ET) --*

Morrison & Foerster LLP has added a transportation industry veteran who has spent nearly eight years with the Obama administration to its Washington, D.C., office, where as chair of the firm's transportation group she plans to work on everything from regulatory matters to cybersecurity.

Katie Thomson comes to Morrison & Foerster having most recently served as general counsel for the U.S. Department of Transportation, a position she held from May 2013 to July of this year, she said. Thomson joins the firm as a partner, and says she will counsel clients on transportation compliance issues, cybersecurity, civil and criminal litigation and internal and governmental investigations.



Katie Thomson

"I was looking for a place where I could find things I liked and build on core transportation issues and energy and sustainability issues so critical to the efficiency of our transportation system," Thomson told Law360. "I found them and they found me, and it turned out to be a perfect platform for me because of the firm's existing footprint."

The firm's existing energy and sustainability practice was a big selling point for Thomson, she said, as well as the fact that many of the firm's clients are well-established in the transportation business.

While working in the Obama administration, Thomson also served as chief counsel for the Federal Aviation Administration for two years, where she focused on enhancing aviation safety and integrating drones into the national airspace, she said.

She also worked for three years as counselor to DOT Secretary Ray LaHood, managing the department's energy, climate and environment issues.

Bill O'Connor, co-chair of Morrison & Foerster's airports and aviation group and its unmanned aircraft systems group, said Thomson's addition to the firm broadens the depth of its transportation practice.

"She has both a tremendous regulatory and litigation experience in terms of complex transportation matters," O'Connor said. "We were excited because she has a reputation of being a problem solver."

Before going to work for the government, Thomson worked for 19 years at Sidley Austin LLP in its

environmental group, focusing on civil and criminal litigation, compliance and regulatory advocacy in the energy generation and hazardous materials transportation fields. She got her undergraduate degree from the University of Illinois in history and Japanese language before going to law school at the University of Pennsylvania.

She said she looks forward to working with clients offering emerging technologies that relate to transportation.

“For the last eight years Katie has played a pivotal role in shaping national transportation law and policy, including those regulations at the intersection of transportation and technology like autonomous vehicles and drones, as well as critical energy and sustainability initiatives,” Morrison & Foerster chair Larren Nashelsky said in a statement.

--Editing by Mark Lebetkin.

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