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TOP 40 UNDER 40

California's leading lawyers of 2017

When Sluder was at Tulane University Law School she was “110 percent sure” she was going to be a litigator. But by the time she made partner at Morrison & Foerster LLP last year, her job had become much more about collaboration than litigation.

“I tell people I have a totally unorthodox career, and I got lucky along the way,” she said.

Sluder is the go-to person at Morrison & Foerster for renewable energy clients. Her work primarily consists of end-to-end representation of renewable energy developers, negotiating project contracts related to the construction and operation of projects, as well as financing and selling such projects.

“We work on the entire life cycle of the project,” Sluder said. “I get to see a project go from nothing more than a plot of land to an actual, tangible operating energy generation facility.”

In the past year, Sluder worked with EDF Renewable Energy Inc. on efforts to build wind farms, including procuring wind turbines and selling the energy generated from such wind farms to corporate buyers.

Sluder has also led Morrison & Foerster's effort related to asset sales from the April 2016 SunEdison Inc. bankruptcy filing on behalf of unsecured creditors. While it was operational, SunEdison was one of the world's largest developers of renewable energy products. In its Chapter 11 filing, SunEdison listed \$16.1 billion in liabilities.

“Because Morrison considers me an energy expert, I really talk to our clients and see where they're going in the future,” Sluder said. “I'm a pretty good matchmaker when it comes to the best way to utilize those technologies and incorporate them into structures that already exist.”

Sluder still gets the litigation itch occa-

Elizabeth C. Sluder



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Practice: Project finance

Age: 37

sionally: At a recent bankruptcy hearing, she asked a colleague if she could object to a mistake one of the lawyers had made and was quickly turned down.

“I have no problem with public speaking and I might be argumentative [on behalf of my clients] from time to time,” Sluder said. “But I'm proud of the work my colleagues

and I do, because it makes a tangible difference. It's one thing to push paper all day and never see the results of your efforts, but to see a renewable energy facility being created and the ripple effect of what that means, it's a feel-good factor that makes the job a lot more enjoyable.”

— Paula Lehman-Ewing