

Narrative In Support of Ann E. Cohen's Nomination for the 2018 Eldon G. Kaul Distinguished Service Award

Ann Cohen spent almost her entire 32 year legal career in public service helping state agencies protect the environment and human health on behalf of the citizens of the State of Minnesota. Ann retired from the Minnesota Attorney General's office in January 2018. Since 1985, Ann represented the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) in almost all areas of environmental law, including solid waste, water quality permitting and enforcement, air quality regulation, feedlots, Superfund and tank remediation, and environmental review. Ann's broad and deep knowledge of federal and state environmental law, her wise counsel to the MPCA, and her advocacy to protect the environment created her legacy of public service.

Ann's entire career has been as an advocate for the environment, whether in administrative proceedings, trial and appellate litigation, mediation and negotiation, or in her extensive client counsel to state regulators. Ann earned the respect of her client agencies, attorney peers, and even opposing counsel, for her quick grasp of complex cases, her practical approach to problem solving, and her ability to work well with opponents in reaching a fair resolution of disputes. Ann has provided thoughtful legal advice and counsel to the MPCA on implementing its statutory authorities and has trained many MPCA staff over decades on the complexities of federal and state environmental law. Ann enjoyed diving into the more complex cases, and would come back from appellate arguments particularly invigorated when the judges had asked many tough questions. Thoughtful, robust legal argument was just as important to Ann as winning any particular motion or case and obtaining a good result.

Ann has readily shared her environmental law knowledge and experience with others, including mentoring many lawyers in the Attorney General's Office new to environmental law, as well as through teaching numerous CLEs and classroom lectures. Ann has been active in providing pro bono legal services. For 15 years, she was a volunteer attorney and volunteer attorney coordinator for Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services (legal aid). In 2010, she received the Minnesota State Bar Association's Pro Bono Attorney Award of Excellence.

After leaving state service, Ann is continuing her advocacy for protection of the environment on behalf of the citizens of the State of Minnesota as a senior staff attorney for Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy.

Ann is a person of quality and integrity, both personally and professionally. Her longstanding, excellent work for the state of Minnesota in environmental law deserves recognition, and for all the above reasons, we believe that Ann is an excellent nominee for the Eldon G. Kaul Distinguished Service Award.