

U.S. Department of Justice: Environment and Natural Resources Division 2017 Report



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The Environment and Natural Resources Division (“ENRD”) of the United States Department of Justice released on April 30th its “Accomplishments Report” (“Report”) for 2017.

ENRD describes the Report as highlighting its enforcement of United States environmental laws, defensive government programs, and collaboration with states and tribes.

The Report describes ENRD’s key objectives as:

- Enforcement of the environmental laws of the United States
- Promoting energy independence and economic growth by reduction of regulatory burdens
- Supporting infrastructure development
- Strengthening national security
- Promoting a cooperation federalism by partnering with states and tribes
- Protecting taxpayer dollars

DOJ’s ENRD was established in 1909 and is organized into 10 sections. ENRD is described as currently handling over 6,967 active cases and matters that represent virtually every federal agency connections with cases arising in all 50 states and the United States territories. Its primary responsibilities include the enforcement of the federal civil and criminal environmental laws. The federal agencies it represents include the United States Environmental Protection Agency, United States Army Corps of Engineers, United States Coast Guard, and Federal Natural Resource Trust Agencies.

ENRD sections that carry out the previously referenced environmental work include the Environmental Enforcement Section, the Environmental Defense Section, and the Environmental Crime Section.

2017 actions undertaken by ENRD are described as including:

- Obtaining court orders requiring responsible parties to clean up hazardous waste and reimburse the government for cleanups conducted by federal agencies
- Civil and criminal cases against Volkswagen
- Work with federal and state partner agencies investigating possible other bad actors in the auto industry
- Securing the largest-ever penalty for crimes involving deliberate vessel pollution
- Requiring PDC Energy to spend approximately \$19.7 million to reduce emissions of volatile organic compounds from 650 tank batteries and pay a \$2.5 million civil penalty
- Negotiation of the cleanup of 94 abandoned uranium mines on Navajo Nation lands
- Criminal prosecution of 20 wildlife traffickers

- Defense of partner agencies in regards to legal challenges to new policy initiatives
- Advising partner agencies on rulemakings and ensuring the effective defense of regulatory actions in court
- Obtaining over \$4.8 billion in civil and criminal fines, penalties, and costs recovered, and the estimated value of federal injunctive relief exceeded \$18.7 billion

[A link to the ENRD Report can be found here.](#)