



William E. Burton III

Partner

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Will's diverse business, administrative and litigation practice is national in scope and focuses primarily on the alcoholic beverage industry, environmental and occupational safety and health, as well as creditor's rights.

Will has in-depth knowledge of the alcoholic beverage industry and counsels industry members as a trusted advisor on strategic business issues and regulatory compliance matters arising under numerous federal and state laws. His alcoholic beverage practice is broad in scope and covers licensing, product formulation, labeling (including Serving Facts/Nutrition Facts declarations), excise taxes, manufacturing (including contract production arrangements and alternating proprietorships), trade practices, advertising, promotional activities, imports/exports, mergers and acquisitions, and corporate governance and restructurings. Will regularly interacts with regulators in the federal Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) as well as state alcohol control/revenue agencies throughout the United States.

His environmental counseling and litigation practice focuses on issues of compliance and strategic planning; auditing; corporate and real estate transactions including the sale, purchase and redevelopment of brownfields properties; negotiation of environmental insurance policies; administrative practice; and OSHA/workplace-safety matters, including process-safety management requirements. Will has significant experience in regulatory compliance issues, including solid and hazardous waste management, siting of solid waste management facilities, permitting, wetland/stream permitting and mitigation, remediation of contaminated properties, compliance with OSHA standards and radiation safety. His litigation experience includes defending industry clients against citizen suits brought under various environmental statutes and challenges to the siting and permitting of highly regulated facilities such as municipal solid waste landfills, significant cost-recovery actions at Superfund sites throughout the United States, underground storage tank actions, and state and federal environmental and OSHA enforcement actions, including citations involving serious injuries and fatalities in the workplace.

In his bankruptcy/creditor's rights practice, Will regularly represents creditors in significant Chapter 11 proceedings, automatic stay litigation, preference/fraudulent conveyance actions, and adversary proceedings.

Services

- Corporate
- Environmental
- Financial Restructuring & Bankruptcy
- Food & Beverage
- Labor & Employment
- Manufacturing

- Workplace Safety & Health

Before Fox Rothschild

Will was a partner at Smith Moore Leatherwood LLP, which combined with Fox Rothschild in 2018.

Bar Admissions

- North Carolina
- District of Columbia

Education

- Wake Forest University School of Law (J.D., 1993)
- North Carolina State University (B.S.B.A., *magna cum laude*, 1990)

Memberships

- Guilford County Bar Association
- North Carolina Bar Association

Honors & Awards

- Selected to the "Best Lawyers in America" list for Bankruptcy and Creditor Debtor Rights / Insolvency and Reorganization Law in Greensboro, NC by *Best Lawyers* (2024-2026)
- Named to *Business North Carolina* magazine's Legal Elite List
 - Bankruptcy (2009-2010, 2014-2016, 2020-2022, 2024, 2025)
 - Environmental (2005, 2007-2009, 2011, 2012, 2026)
- Selected as Outside Counsel of the Year by a large national alcoholic beverage company