Holland & Hart



PRACTICES

Appellate
Environmental
Environmental Litigation
Federal Lands Permitting

INDUSTRIES

Conventional Power
Energy and Resources
Mining
Oil and Gas
Renewable Energy and Storage

EDUCATION

University of Denver Sturm College of Law, J.D., 2018
Order of the Coif
Transportation Law Journal, Technical Editor

Colorado College, B.A., 2012
cum laude
Biology with distinction. Secondary Emphasis: Economics and International Affairs.

BAR ADMISSIONS

Colorado

COURT ADMISSIONS

U.S. District Court for the District of Colorado
U.S. District Court for the District of Montana
U.S. District Court for the District of New Mexico
U.S. District Court for the District of Wyoming
U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas

Utsarga Bhattarai

Associate

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Utsarga is a creative, strategic advocate for energy and natural resources clients facing complex federal regulatory challenges.

Utsarga helps clients navigate compliance with federal laws and regulations, defends against Office of Natural Resources Revenue (ONRR) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) enforcement actions, handles appeals before the Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA), and litigates royalty disputes—including allegations of royalty underpayment and False Claims Act proceedings.

He also guides clients developing mining and oil and gas projects through administrative agency review, from pre-permitting compliance to NEPA review. Utsarga advises clients on regulatory submissions and strategy for comments on new or proposed changes to federal rules and laws.

When disputes arise in or move to federal court, Utsarga litigates appeals of administrative agency decisions, defends challenged project approvals, and handles private-party disputes involving a federal regulatory nexus. Clients value his ability to craft creative, compelling arguments aligned with their long-term business goals.

From his experience as an international mediation consultant, Utsarga leverages negotiation strategy even in adversarial settings. Clients also benefit from his background providing strategic counseling on complex policy issues.

Before joining Holland & Hart, Utsarga served as a judicial clerk for Chief Justice Monica M. Márquez of the Colorado Supreme Court. During law school, Utsarga was an extern at the U.S. District Court for the District of Colorado.

EXPERIENCE

Utsarga handles litigation or appeals involving:

- Administrative Procedure Act (APA)
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA)
- Federal Oil and Gas Royalty Management Act (FOGRMA)
- False Claims Act (FCA)
- Mineral Leasing Act (MLA)
- Oil and gas law
- Mining law

- Environmental law
- Native American law
- Administrative law and procedure

Handles or advises clients on:

- Appellate advocacy
- Administrative appeals
- Defending federal permits
- False Claims Act proceedings and fraud investigations
- Federal court administrative-law matters
- Leasing and lease status – private, federal, state, and Indian
- Mining projects
- Oil-and-gas royalty disputes
- Permitting and regulatory compliance
- Renewable-energy projects
- State or federal royalty payment audits
- Trespass and sub-surface trespass issues

PUBLICATIONS

"ONRR Proposes New Rule to Streamline Federal Royalty Valuation," *Oil & Gas Update*, 2026

"BLM Rules, Policies and Practices Affecting Royalty on Federal and Indian Oil and Gas Leases," *The Foundation Journal for Natural Resources and Energy Law VOLUME 61, NUMBER 2, 2024*, Co-Author, December 2024

"BLM Finalized New Waste Prevention Rule – What Does it Mean for Industry? ," *Holland & Hart Federal Lands Update*, April 1, 2024

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

"Environmental Issues in Solar Energy Projects," *Panelist, Strafford CLE Webinar*, March 27, 2025

"BLM Rules, Policies, and Practices Affecting Royalty Reporting and Payment Obligations," *The Foundation for Natural Resources and Energy Law*, Houston, TX, April 25, 2024

RECOGNITION

- LCLD, Pathfinder Atlas Award, 2024

PROFESSIONAL AND CIVIC AFFILIATIONS

- Leadership Council on Legal Diversity, Pathfinder, 2024
- South Asian Bar Association, Member