



Melissa Salhab Sykes

Partner

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PRACTICE AREAS

Electric Energy

Corporate & Business Transactions

Legislative & Governmental Relations

Real Estate

INDUSTRIES

Electric Energy

Real Estate

Melissa Salhab Sykes has more than 20 years of experience in the electric energy industry. She has extensive experience representing electric cooperatives and municipally-owned utilities across the state of Texas in business transactions, including developing and negotiating wholesale and retail power supply contracts, electric facilities purchase and sales transactions, electric utility product supply chain alliance agreements, municipal franchise agreements, wind and solar lease transactions, and debt financing and restructuring transactions. Melissa also advises electric cooperatives on corporate governance matters and cooperative policies and tariffs.

Melissa's transactional practice also includes representation of financial institutions in transactional matters, such as secondary market transactions (e.g. loan purchase and sale agreements and servicing agreements) and third-party vendor services agreements. Melissa also advises privately owned businesses on an array of business-related matters including commercial contract transactions, acquisitions and commercial leases, as well as corporate governance matters.

Representative Experience

Electric Energy

Melissa's substantial experience in electric energy includes:

- Representing large-scale utility manufacturing and distribution service company on corporate governance and general business matters, as well as contract preparation and negotiations with third parties.
- Representing cooperative clients on corporate and business issues, including corporate governance and policy matters, as well as the selection, formation and operation of for-profit subsidiaries and joint ventures.
- Representing electric cooperatives on legislative and regulatory policy matters.
- Negotiating agreements with local political subdivisions for franchises and easements.
- Preparing and negotiating auxiliary electric service agreements with wind farms.
- Representing electric cooperative clients in policies regarding the implementation of ratemaking standards under the federal Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act (PURPA), as they relate to energy efficiency resource planning as well as smart grid information and investments.
- Actively participating in electric utility restructuring issues and subsequent stakeholder meetings

with the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) to establish market rules for the restructured electric industry, as well as various Public Utility Commission of Texas rulemaking projects to implement Texas' restructuring legislation.

Corporate & Business Transactions

Melissa's significant transactional experience includes:

- Representing major motorsports and entertainment organizer and promoter in preparing, advising and negotiating agreements with motorsport sanctioning entities, sponsors, governmental entities and goods and service providers.
- Representing international micro-processor engineering corporation in connection with negotiation of Texas datacenter project.
- Representing small and medium business clients as general corporate counsel on governance matters, reorganizations and entity conversions, as well as negotiation of commercial contracts, including retail service agreements, shareholder agreements, corporate-operating agreements, confidentiality and proprietary information agreements, consulting agreements, asset and stock sale/purchase agreements, and wholesale power agreements.
- Counseling corporate clients in governance matters, including best practices, bylaws drafting and director issues.
- Representing national mortgage lending institution in multi-million dollar credit facility transactions and secondary mortgage market transactions.
- Representing healthcare industry technology clients on corporate governance and contract drafting and negotiations.
- Representing medical device quality assurance company in contract preparation and negotiation.
- Representing local grocery cooperative on cooperative governance matters.
- Representing local beer cooperative on corporate matters, including cooperative governance and lease negotiation.
- Representing publicly-traded company in the sale of a subsidiary.
- Representing commercial construction client in the purchase of a construction business and subsequent negotiation of owner-contractor and subcontractor agreements.

Economic Development

Melissa advises companies on the availability of state and local economic development incentives across Texas. She assists clients with locating and developing projects and with negotiating economic development incentive agreements.

Professional Associations & Community Involvement

- Association of Women in Energy, Board of Directors
- State Bar of Texas: Public Utility Law Section and Business Law Section
- Austin Bar Association, Business Law Section
- Travis County Women Lawyers Association
- Gulf Coast Power Association

- NRECA Electric Cooperative Bar Association
- Wonders and Worries, Inc., Board of Directors

Bar Admissions

- Texas

Education/Professional Background

- The University of Texas School of Law, J.D., 1996
- Vanderbilt University, B.A., 1993