# POSITION DESCRIPTION

# assistant attorney general (environment and natural resources division), Department of justice

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| **OVERVIEW** | |
| Senate Committee | Judiciary |
| Agency Mission | To enforce the law and defend the interests of the United States according to the law, ensure public safety against foreign and domestic threats, provide federal leadership in preventing and controlling crime, seek just punishment for those guilty of unlawful behavior and ensure fair and impartial administration of justice for all Americans |
| Position Overview | This assistant attorney general for the Environment and Natural Resources Division (ENRD) is responsible for the federal and state court litigation to safeguard and enhance the American environment; acquire and manage public lands and natural resources; and protect and manage Indian rights and property. |
| Compensation | Level IV $155,500 (5 U.S.C. § 5315)[[1]](#endnote-1) |
| Position Reports to | Associate Attorney General[[2]](#endnote-2) |
| **RESPONSIBILITIES** | |
| Management Scope | The ENRD fiscal 2016 budget was $112 million.[[3]](#endnote-3) The assistant attorney general manages a 700-person division that includes 400 lawyers.[[4]](#endnote-4) |
| Primary Responsibilities | Leads the ENRD of the Department of Justice, which:   * Handles environmental and natural resources litigation on behalf of the U.S. * Enforces the nation’s environmental laws to ensure clean air, water and land for all Americans * Conducts litigation enacted to require the cleanup of hazardous waste or recover the costs of cleanup, control dredging and filling in navigable water, and the use of pesticides * Conducts litigation concerning the management of the fisheries and other living resources of the coastal and marine environments, and the management of the coastal zone * Conducts litigation under numerous federal statutes and laws involving public land matters on behalf of the departments of the Interior, Agriculture, Defense and others * Conducts litigation under the National Environmental Policy Act, the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act, and the Tucker Act, among many others[[5]](#endnote-5) * Prosecutes criminal cases under federal pollution and wildlife laws * Defends environmental and natural resources laws, and federal agency programs and actions * Litigates cases under statutes providing for the management of public lands, and natural and cultural resources * Conducts the division’s appellate litigation in federal circuit courts of appeals and state appellate tribunals * Advises the attorney general, Congress, the Office of Management and Budget and the White House, on matters of environmental and natural resources law[[6]](#endnote-6) * Oversees the federal government’s acquisition of real property by eminent domain * Litigates cases concerning Indian rights and claims[[7]](#endnote-7)   Leads the ENRD’s lawyers, who:   * Bring cases against those who violate the nation’s civil and criminal pollution-control laws (nearly one-half of the lawyers) * Defend environmental challenges to government programs and activities * Represent the U.S. in matters concerning the stewardship of the nation’s natural resources and public lands[[8]](#endnote-8) |
| Strategic Goals and Priorities | [Depends on the policy priorities of the administration] |
| **REQUIREMENTS AND COMPETENCIES** | |
| Requirements | * Distinguished lawyer * Experience in related legal matters, whether environmental laws, water laws or other issue areas in the department * Litigation experience, or experience supervising or managing litigation, such as for a company handling environmental claims (useful) * Strong management experience * Prior government experience (a plus) |
| Competencies | * Strong communication and interpersonal skills * Excellent leadership skills * Ability to work under high pressure and handle sensitive matters * Excellent negotiation skills * Ability to work in a matrixed environment * Good temperament * Ability to lead by example * Management focused; ability to navigate bureaucracy and manage a federal agency |
| **PAST APPOINTEES** | |
| John C. Cruden (2014 to 2017): President, Environmental Law Institute; Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Environment and Natural Resources Division; Chief, Environmental Enforcement Section, Environment and Natural Resources Division[[9]](#endnote-9) | |
| Ignacia S. Moreno (2009 to 2013): Federal Representative, Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Task Force, Office of the Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency; Counsel, Corporate Environmental Programs, General Electric Company; General Counsel, Executive Committee, National Hispanic Bar Association[[10]](#endnote-10) | |
| Ronald J. Tenpas (2007 to 2009): Associate Deputy Attorney General; U.S. Attorney, Southern District of Illinois; Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Maryland[[11]](#endnote-11) | |

1. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (Public Law 115-31, May 5, 2017), contains a provision that continues the freeze on the payable pay rates for certain senior political officials at 2013 levels during calendar year 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. https://www.justice.gov/agencies/chart [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Leadership Directories [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. https://www.morganlewis.com/bios/rtenpas [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. OMB [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. https://www.justice.gov/enrd/organization-chart/chart [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. https://www.justice.gov/enrd/what-we-do [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. https://www.justice.gov/enrd/what-we-do [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. https://www.justice.gov/enrd/meet-assistant-attorney-general-0 [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Leadership Directories [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. https://www.morganlewis.com/bios/rtenpas [↑](#endnote-ref-11)