POSITION DESCRIPTION

**solicitor, Department of interior**

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| **OVERVIEW** |
| Senate Committee | Energy and Natural Resources |
| Agency Mission | The Department of the Interior protects and manages the nation’s natural resources and cultural heritage; provides scientific and other information about those resources; and honors its trust responsibilities or special commitments to American Indians, Alaska Natives, and affiliated Island Communities. |
| Position Overview | The Solicitor is the principal legal adviser to the Secretary and the chief law officer of the department. |
| Compensation | Level IV $155,500 (5 U.S.C. § 5315)[[1]](#endnote-1) |
| Position Reports to | Secretary of the Interior |
| **RESPONSIBILITIES** |
| Management Scope | In fiscal 2015, the Department of the Interior had $12,340 million in outlays and 48,798 total employment. The solicitor’s office has more than 400 total employees, 300 of which are attorneys licensed in 40 states. The solicitor’s office is organized into the Immediate Office of the Solicitor, the Ethics Office, five legal divisions, an administrative division and 18 regional and field offices located throughout the United States. |
| Primary Responsibilities | * Serves as the principal legal adviser to the Secretary and the chief law officer of the department
* Provides legal advice to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary and members of their staffs, the assistant secretaries of the department, the heads of the offices and bureaus of the department and all other officers and employees of the department
* Formulates the legal policies of the department and resolves any conflicts that may arise in the application of these policies
* Provides legal services for all programs, operations and activities of the department including the following programs: energy and minerals; land and water resources; fish and wildlife and parks; Indian affairs; territories; and management and administrative affairs
* Manages the department's Ethics Office and resolves Freedom of Information Act Appeals
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| Strategic Goals and Priorities | [Depends on the policy priorities of the administration]  |
| **REQUIREMENTS AND COMPETENCIES** |
| Requirements | * Distinguished legal career
* Leadership and management experience
* Understanding of federal regulatory and legislative processes
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| Competencies | * Strong interpersonal and communication skills
* Ability to prioritize and manage a significant number of policy initiatives and legal matters simultaneously while pushing the ball forward
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| **PAST APPOINTEES** |
| Hilary Tompkins (2009 to 2017) - Adjunct Professor, University of New Mexico School of Law; Chief Counsel, Gov. Bill Richardson; Attorney, Sonosky, Chambers Sachse, Endreson & Perry; Special Assistant to the U.S. Attorney, Eastern District of New York |
| David L. Bernhardt (2006 to 2009) - Deputy Solicitor, Department of Interior; Deputy Chief of Staff, Department of Interior; Counselor to the Secretary of Interior; Director, Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs, Department of Interior |
| Sue Ellen Wooldridge (2004 to 2005) - Deputy Chief of Staff, Department of Interior; Partner, Riegels, Campos, and Kenyon LLP; Special Assistant, Attorney General of California; Special Assistant Attorney General, State of California |

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)