



GETCHES-WILKINSON CENTER

**for Natural Resources, Energy, and
the Environment at Colorado Law**

GWC Advisory Council



Michael Connor

Partner
WilmerHale

Michael Connor's practice focuses on natural resources, energy development, environmental compliance and Native American law. He provides strategic advice, counseling, legal and legislative support to businesses, tribes and other entities, helping them navigate complex policies, statutes, regulations and treaties associated with the use, conservation, and protection of natural resources.

Mr. Connor previously served as Deputy Secretary of the US Department of the Interior, addressing some of the most complex natural resource issues facing federal agencies across the nation. With more than two decades of government experience, Mr. Connor is well equipped to provide clients with strategic advice regarding regulatory, public policy and legislative matters related to natural resources and Federal Indian law. He advises clients seeking to initiate projects and activities involving the use, development, or conservation of public lands, water resources, the outer-continental shelf and federal infrastructure, to effectively address the statutes and regulatory requirements managed by federal, state and local agencies. Mr. Connor earned a reputation in government as an authority on water resources law and policy, and is a trusted source for legal advice and policy support regarding water resource use and sustainable development.

Additionally, Mr. Connor supports Native American tribes seeking to gain legal recognition of long-standing rights, assess opportunities for the sustainable use of their land and water resources, develop projects to provide services and economic development opportunities, and protect their interests in government proceedings that could affect their rights and interests. He is an enrolled member of the Taos Pueblo in New Mexico.

Before joining WilmerHale, Mr. Connor held an array of positions within the federal government, including high-level positions in the Obama Administration. As noted, he served as Deputy Secretary of the US Department of the Interior from 2014-2017, as well as Commissioner of the US Bureau of Reclamation from 2009-2014, leading efforts to develop strategies, build coalitions and implement actions to carry out President Obama's energy, natural resources, conservation, climate change and Native American policies. He previously served as counsel to the US Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, which included managing the Water and Power Subcommittee. In this position, he developed, negotiated and enacted legislation involving water resources, energy, and Native American issues. Mr. Connor also served as director of the Indian Water Rights Office at the Department of the Interior.

Mr. Connor previously served as an adjunct professor at Georgetown Law.