

STATE OF MONTANA
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Chief Legal Counsel

\$118,000 - \$125,000

At the Montana Department of Environmental Quality, our work impacts all Montanans. Our agency mission is to champion a healthy environment for a thriving Montana. Whether it's the water you drink at a restaurant, the air you breathe on a hike, or the energy that lights up your home — we provide environmental oversight, clean-up, and energy resource information to the people and businesses of Montana.

THE POSITION

We are actively recruiting for a Chief Legal Counsel to lead our legal program and help guide environmental and energy legal strategy for the state.

The Chief Legal Counsel for Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is a challenging and rewarding opportunity to be at the forefront of Montana environmental and energy policy, regulation, litigation, and legislation. This position goes beyond legal expertise. In addition to being the principal attorney for the Department, your ability to lead people will be equally in demand. Your management responsibilities will be focused on the fine details of the legal program; however, your influence will easily extend throughout the entire Department as a member of the Senior Leadership Team, and beyond. As Chief Legal Counsel, you will be a key member of Senior Leadership and drive decisions in drafting environmental and energy policy and regulation, developing and sustaining our organizational culture, making operational or process changes in the legal program, and helping to serve and defend the Department programs.

DUTIES

Advice and Consultation

Consult with and provide advice to the Director, Deputy Director, and Division Administrators regarding legal and policy issues facing the agency.

Leadership and Personnel Management

Actively manage resources and lead by example our Department mission, goals, strategies, measures, and core values.

Legal, Legislative, and Agency Representation

Personally, or through legal staff, advise and represent the Department in administrative and judicial actions brought by the Department or in which the Department is a named respondent or defendant. Chief Legal Counsel is responsible for the determination of legal strategy, coordinating with the lead litigator and client, and reviewing and drafting legislation that will impact the Department.

Legal Drafting

Prepare written legal memoranda and opinions; review, draft and supervise the adoption, amendment, and repeal of agency administrative rules; review and propose necessary changes to Departmental contracts.

IDEAL CANDIDATE

As the Chief Legal Counsel at the Montana Department of Environmental Quality, in addition to being a good lawyer, we want someone passionate about serving the public and protecting the environment while facilitating economic diversity and growth. A dynamic, collegial personality with confidence to engage and foster teambuilding is essential. The Chief Legal Counsel will engage with offices, agencies, and representatives outside of DEQ, cultivating relationships with peers, stakeholders, and elected officials to serve the public and agency interest.

As a strategic thinker, the Chief Legal Counsel will be able to identify ambiguity in regulation and the law, then craft simple and novel remedies. Calm throughout stressful situations, our Chief Legal Counsel will possess strong emotional intelligence in often contentious situations. A sense of humor and a lighthearted demeanor is always welcome. Finally, the successful candidate will have strong writing skills. Cover letters for this position will be carefully examined for grammar, content, and form.

Additional characteristics/experience that will lead to success:

- Prior leadership that demonstrates accountability, efficiency and effectiveness
- Ability to effectively communicate including active, respectful disagreement and consensus-building with audiences of different views and backgrounds
- Demonstrated ability to work within divergent policy and political opinions
- Embracing and supporting a team-oriented culture

THE AGENCY AND COMMUNITY

The Montana Department of Environmental Quality's employees are the heart of our organization and culture. Our wellness committee and mentorship program are employee-led and provide educational events, small interest-based social groups, and opportunities to grow personally and professionally with guidance from a mentor.

Helena is an outdoor recreator's paradise—home to miles of trails, glistening lakes and winter skiing. Helena's central location makes it easy to take a day trip to Missoula or Bozeman and it's within driving distance of two breathtaking national parks. The downtown walking mall features shops, restaurants and breweries with events and live music throughout the year. For more about the Helena experience, visit:

<https://helenamt.com/>

This position may be eligible for a statutory base salary annual increase of 4% effective July 1, 2024.

The position includes a career ladder for professional development and pay progression.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

- Hold a juris doctorate degree
- Be licensed to practice law in Montana state courts and the federal district court for Montana at the time of hire
- Have five (5) years of progressively responsible professional experience in environmental or constitutional law, including judicial litigation
- Have five (5) years of management experience
- Demonstrate strong leadership, analytical, and critical thinking skills
- Be skilled in understanding varying perspectives, yet decisive
- Be capable of effecting change
- Have demonstrated experience in negotiating, dispute resolution, decision-making, planning, goal setting, plan execution, continuous process improvement, and monitoring progress towards goals

Montana DEQ may consider alternative combinations of education and experience on a case-by-case basis.

Apply at <https://deq.mt.gov/careers>