



SHAREHOLDER

Michael L. Caldwell

Zausmer 

(248) 254-4818
mcaldwell@zausmer.com

As leader of the firm's environmental law practice and a member of the litigation team, Michael Caldwell brings a creative problem-solving mindset and a broad range of experience to his clients' litigation, regulatory, and transactional needs. He takes great pride in providing real value to his clients with results-oriented and cost-effective legal counsel.

Mike has represented Fortune 50 companies, municipalities, small businesses, and individuals in a variety of complex litigation matters, including environmental and general civil disputes. As one of the foremost environmental litigators in the state, he has handled cases, including class actions, involving soil and groundwater remediation claims, Superfund and Part 201 cost recovery, toxic torts, wetlands permits, mold disputes, and environmental insurance coverage in both state and federal courts. In one matter, he successfully defended an environmental suit seeking over \$130 million in response costs, and in another case he secured environmental insurance proceeds of \$10 million.

Mike regularly leverages his ability as a litigator to obtain the optimal results for his clients. A prime example is his role as lead litigation counsel for a client mired in a politically-charged environmental enforcement action regarding one of the largest groundwater contamination sites in Michigan. After challenging the State of Michigan's initial cleanup plan in court, he obtained court approval of the client's proposed remediation program, which provided feasible and cost-effective protection for human health and the environment. His leadership was invaluable in the same matter when the discovery of another plume of contamination in a heavily congested residential neighborhood sparked further public outcry and calls for the company to rectify the problem with a technically-infeasible government plan with a ruinous price tag. Mike helped the client weather the public relations storm and devised, litigated, and obtained judicial approval of a realistic cleanup plan that saved the client upwards of \$60 million – all in the face of intense political opposition. In addition, he has also obtained successful results for clients in cases involving business contract disputes, insurance coverage claims, and other civil litigation matters.

Outside the courts, Mike has utilized creative strategies and out-of-the-box thinking to help developers and municipalities secure sites for electrical power generating plants, bulk petroleum distribution facilities, and residential developments on environmentally challenged properties, and has successfully negotiated prospective purchaser agreements and covenants-not-to-sue with both federal and state agencies in connection with such brownfield projects. He regularly advises clients on brownfield redevelopment, land use issues, and real estate conveyances. And as a member of several stakeholder groups that regularly meet with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Mike has helped shape the statutory amendments and administrative rules that comprise our state's environmental laws. He is the Firm's representative on the prestigious Environmental Law Network, an association of firms with elite environmental law expertise.

Mike earned his undergraduate degree from James Madison College at Michigan State University, and his law degree from the University of Michigan. He is active with various sections of the State Bar of Michigan, and served on the Environmental Law Section Council from 2009 to 2012. He has also received various honors, including selection by his peers to the annual lists of Best Lawyers in America, DBusiness Top Lawyers, and SuperLawyers.

PRACTICE AREAS

Environmental Law
Insurance Coverage
Real Property

EDUCATION

University of Michigan Law School,
Juris Doctor, 1987

Michigan State University, James Madison College,
Bachelor of Arts in Justice, Morality, and Constitutional
Democracy, 1984

BAR ADMISSIONS

State of Michigan
U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals
U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan
U.S. District Court for the Western District of Michigan

PROFESSIONAL GROUPS

State Bar of Michigan, *Administrative & Regulatory Law, Environmental Law, Litigation, and Real Property Law Sections; Environmental Law Sections Council, 2009-2012*
Oakland County Bar Association
Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Part 201
Advisory Group Member
Environmental Law Network

HONORS & AWARDS

Best Lawyers Lawyer of the Year, Environmental Law and
Environmental Litigation - 2026
Best Lawyers – 2013 to Present
DBusiness Top Lawyers – 2015 to Present
SuperLawyers (Michigan) – 2015 to Present



FARMINGTON HILLS

32255 Northwestern Highway, Suite 225
Farmington Hills, MI 48334
Phone: (248) 851-4111 Fax: (248) 851-0100