



Abby L. Risner

Partner | Group Leader, Energy Industry

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St. Louis - 314.345.4785

Abby defends energy companies, franchisors, manufacturers, and distributors against claims related to consumer fraud, advertising, franchise termination, unfair business practices, contract disputes, and other matters. She has tried cases to verdict and has experience in every phase of litigation, including as first chair in court and arbitration. Her extensive nationwide trial experience gives her a keen understanding of what it takes to handle complex disputes efficiently and effectively.

As the leader of UB Greensfelder's Energy Industry Group, Abby routinely represents clients in energy disputes and advises on business issues associated with the Petroleum Marketing Practices Act (PMPA) and retail motor fuel marketing, including pricing, contracts, antitrust, and termination issues. She has defended claims against major energy companies related to termination under the PMPA and franchise laws, breach of contract and fraud claims, alleged unlawful motor fuel pricing practices, price posting, deed restrictions, and consumer protection claims. Her knowledge of the energy sector and the trial process has made her an important resource for the global companies she represents.

Abby has extensive experience defending against class action claims. Abby's litigation experience includes prevailing on class action claims through dispositive motions, defeating class certification, complex class action settlements, class action notice and claims process, and trials. She has defended dozens of class actions in federal and state courts nationwide, including the Southern District of Illinois, Eastern District of Missouri, Western District of Missouri, Cook, Madison and St. Clair Counties in Illinois, and St. Louis City and St. Louis County in Missouri.

In her franchising and distribution practice, Abby counsels clients on the termination of franchisees and distributors, as well as defense of litigation of claims in court and arbitration (including international arbitration). She advises on state franchise and distributor laws and works with clients facing disputes that arise as they bring their products and services to market.

Abby enjoys spending time outside the office with her children, including cheering them on at their many sporting activities, and traveling the world with her husband and children.

Practices & Industries

- Energy Industry
- Franchising & Distribution Industry
- Distribution
- Established & Growing Franchisors
- Franchising Regulatory Compliance & Exemptions
- Energy
- Litigation & Dispute Resolution
- Regulatory & Antitrust Law
- Class Actions
- Energy Litigation
- Franchising & Distribution
- Convenience Retailing
- Oil & Gas
- Renewables
- Mobility, Consumers & Products
- Employment Class Actions

Education

- Saint Louis University School of Law (J.D., *cum laude*, 2005)
- Principia College (B.A., *with honors*, 2000)

Bar Admissions

- Missouri
- Illinois
- U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Missouri
- U.S. District Court, Southern District of Illinois
- U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Wisconsin
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Eighth Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Ninth Circuit

Professional Affiliations

- Institute for Energy Law's Litigation and Dispute Resolution Committee (*Officer*)
- Petroleum Marketing Attorneys' Conference (*Co-Chair, 2018-present*)
- Rocky Mountain Mineral Law Foundation (*Former Trustee*)
- Institute for Energy Law (*Advisory Board*)
- American Bar Association, Section of Litigation (*Energy & Environmental Committee, Former Programming Co-Chair*)
- ABA Forum on Franchising, Litigation and Alternative Dispute Resolution Division (*Steering Committee, 2023-present*)
- ABA Class Actions & Derivative Suits Committee (*Former Roundtable Programming Co-Chair*)
- The Missouri Bar
- Bar Association of Metropolitan St. Louis
- The Theodore McMillian American Inn of Court, St. Louis Chapter (*Barrister, 2011-2014*)

Community Involvement

- Missouri Botanical Garden (*Young Friends Council, Alumni Board of Directors*)
- National Charity League, Gateway Chapter (*Patroness, 2023-present*)

Firm Involvement

- Group Leader, Energy Industry
- Member, Governing Board

Awards & Honors

- Ranked as one of Missouri's "Leaders in Their Field" in Litigation: General Commercial by Chambers USA: America's Leading Lawyers for Business (2026)
- Named to *The Best Lawyers in America*®, Mass Tort Litigation/Class Actions - Defendants, Missouri (2024-2026)

- *Corporate Counsel Business Journal*, 50 Women to Watch (2023)
- Named a “Litigation Star” in Missouri by *Benchmark Litigation* (2016-2022; 2025; 2026)
- Named a “Future Star” in Missouri by *Benchmark Litigation* (2015)
- *Missouri Lawyers Media*, Women’s Justice Award (2019)
- *Missouri Lawyers Weekly*, Up and Coming Lawyer (2013)

Experience

- Prevailed on summary judgment on Petroleum Marketing Practices Act claims in *Crossroad Petroleum, Inc. v. BP West Coast Products LLC* (S.D. Cal.).
- Served as lead counsel in an arbitration hearing related to a development agreement for a franchise before ICC in Paris, France.
- Defended class actions asserting consumer protection claims under state laws, including Missouri, Illinois, California, Oregon, Colorado, Washington, and Michigan.
- Defended major oil companies in both class actions and multi-district litigations (MDLs) involving consumer protection claims.
- Defended and prosecuted claims concerning termination or nonrenewal under the Petroleum Marketing Practices Act.
- Defeated a class action pertaining to student loan servicing on motion to dismiss. *Nelson v. Great Lakes Educ. Loan Servs., Inc.* (S.D. Ill.).
- Prevailed on summary judgment for amounts owed by franchisees and to enforce guarantees.
- Defeated several claims, including a claim under the Missouri Merchandising Practices Act (MMPA), on motion to dismiss in a class action.
- Defended a major oil company against former operators of branded stations who claimed the defendant defrauded them and breached contracts in connection with the operation of those stations. Plaintiffs were seeking \$28 million in damages. The case was dismissed entirely in favor of client.
- Advised and defended clients in litigation of business models.
- Advised on the sale of BP’s Texas City refinery, four terminals, and part of its distribution network to Marathon Petroleum Corp., including branded wholesaler contracts supplying approximately 1,200 retail sites in Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida, as well as issues raised by wholesalers after the sale.
- Served as lead counsel in litigation against more than a hundred dealers arising from termination of franchises.
- Defended class actions brought under Illinois’ Biometric Information Privacy Act (BIPA) and Genetic Information Privacy Act (GIPA).

Energy

Abby has nearly two decades of experience working with energy clients on their disputes and litigation. She has first-chair experience in the courtroom and before arbitrators, trying cases for energy clients nationwide.

Abby is highly regarded for her pragmatic approach and collaboration, offering deep industry knowledge and experience. Abby is often the first call on disputes related to the Petroleum Marketing Practices Act. She leads UB Greensfelder's Energy Industry Group. Abby frequently speaks and provides thought leadership on energy issues, including as chair for the conference for petroleum marketing attorneys and as part of the Institute for Energy Law as an officer of the Litigation and Dispute Resolution Committee.

Abby has experience representing clients in disputes and litigation for energy clients involving:

- **Distribution and marketing:** Addressing claims relating to Petroleum Marketing Practices Act, state franchise and distribution laws, federal and state pricing claims (including UCC § 2-305 and Robinson-Patman Act claims), and breach of contract, fraud, and business tort claims.
- **Class actions:** Defending energy clients in claims arising from consumer protection, deceptive or unfair trade practice acts, marketing/advertising, motor fuel pricing, price posting, and products.
- **Brand covenants/deed restrictions/ROFRs:** Claims to enforce and defend brand covenants/deed restrictions on the use property.
- **Litigation involving alternative profit centers,** including associated lubricant services, convenience stores, and quick-serve restaurants.
- **M&A disputes:** Litigation arising out of buying and selling energy assets, including refineries, pipelines, terminals, and related supply agreements.
- **Business disputes and litigation:** Representing clients in a variety of matters before state and federal courts and arbitration panels involving contractual issues.

For more information on our Energy Group, [click here](#).

Representative Experience

- Lead counsel representing a client against termination claims seeking injunctive relief.
- Lead counsel for a refiner in its successful defeat of PMPA claims in *Crossroad Petroleum, Inc. v. BP West Coast Products LLC* (S.D. Cal.).
- Defended a refiner in a jury trial challenging channel of trade model.
- Defended a refiner in a jury trial alleging fraud and misrepresentation claims.
- Consulted on marketing and PMPA issues related to a refiner's divestment of a refinery and associated downstream assets.
- Defense of energy clients in class actions, including in California, Illinois, New York, and Oregon.
- Defended a refiner in a class action alleging national and state class claims for breach of contract and deceptive advertising related to a consumer marketing program.
- Counseling related to marketing/advertising issues, including on EV aspects.
- Counseling on pricing and antitrust issues for energy clients.

Media & Publications include:

- "[An Active FTC Announces it is Seeking Public Comment on the Alternative Fuels Rule: Potential Developments Impact EV Charging Stations](#)," Lexology (October 2023)

- Interviewed by *QSR Magazine* on EV issues in (2023)
- "Legal Considerations for Incorporating EV Chargers into Your Franchise System," Lexology (March 2023)
- "Is It Time to Revisit Your Pricing? The Renewed Interest in Price Discrimination Claims," *The Franchise Lawyer*, American Bar Association (Summer 2022)
- "Five Trends to Watch in the Rapidly Evolving Energy Industry: Takeaways from the Petroleum Marketing Attorneys' Meeting," Lexology (April 2022)
- "Petroleum Marketing Practices Act 101," Webinar, Rocky Mountain Mineral Law Foundation (September 2021)
- "Multi-Branding, Multi-Channel of Trade Marketing and Antitrust," Petroleum Marketing Attorneys' Meeting, Houston, TX (October 2018)
- "Motion to dismiss granted on PMPA claims brought by unbranded motor fuel stations," Lexology (April 2018)
- "Commercial Litigation & PMPA Update," 2016 American Bar Association Petroleum Marketing Attorneys' Meeting, Washington, D.C. (April 2016)

Franchise & Distribution Litigation

Abby regularly defends franchisors on claims related to franchise and distribution. Her litigation experience includes allegations related to breach of franchise agreements, FDD disclosures, fraud, and the termination of franchisees and distributors. Abby has first-chair experience litigating on behalf of clients nationwide in court and arbitration (including international arbitration). Combining her litigation experience with her knowledge of the franchise industry, she has been successful in having franchisors dismissed from putative class actions at the outset of a case.

She advises clients facing disputes that arise as they bring their products and services to market. Abby is experienced in advising clients on the federal and state franchise and distribution laws, including sales representative, business opportunity, and industry-specific laws, and the related disputes that arise from those relationships.

Abby is active in the ABA's Forum on Franchising and is on the Steering Committee for the Litigation and Alternative Dispute Resolution Division. In addition to being a member of the ABA's Forum on Franchising and International Franchise Association, she frequently writes on franchise topics. Her most recent publications include "Recent Decisions Provide Guidance on Drafting and Enforcing Indemnity Provisions in Franchise Contracts" and "Is it Time to Revisit Your Pricing? The Renewed Interest in Price Discrimination Claims."

Class Actions

With her experience defending class actions in some of the most challenging venues in the country, Abby is experienced at defending high-stakes class actions. Abby has represented clients in dozens of class actions nationwide, including in California, Illinois, Missouri, New York, and other states. She has defended clients in all stages of class action practice, including the trial of a class action case to verdict, as well as multidistrict litigation (MDL).

Abby focuses on defeating class actions at the earliest stage possible. She has successfully defeated class certification, eliminated, and narrowed putative class claims through dispositive motions, and crafted creative class action settlements. She routinely addresses issues under the Class Action Fairness Act (CAFA) and has experience with the unique issues of damages, the use of national caliber experts on both merits and class certification issues, and with contractual class action waivers. Abby's experience includes directing the administration of the claims and notice processes for class sizes in the millions.

Abby's class action experience runs the gamut of the modern economy, including in the areas of:

- Consumer protection claims
- Deceptive and unfair trade practices claims
- Advertising
- Energy
- Franchising
- Health care services and billing practices
- Insurance
- Privacy
- Securities
- Environmental

Representative Experience includes:

- Defended class actions asserting consumer protection claims under state laws, including Missouri, Illinois, California, Oregon, Colorado, New York, Washington, and Michigan.
- Defended major energy companies in both class actions and MDLs involving consumer protection claims.
- Defeated a class action pertaining to student loan servicing on motion to dismiss. *Nelson v. Great Lakes Educ. Loan Servs., Inc.* (S.D. Ill.).
- Defeated class certification in Illinois state court.
- Defeated several claims, including a claim under the Missouri Merchandising Practices Act (MMPA), on motion to dismiss in a class action.
- Defended class actions brought under Illinois' Biometric Information Privacy Act (BIPA) and Genetic Information Privacy Act (GIPA).

Abby also writes on class actions, including "An Epic Supreme Court Decision Enforcing Class Arbitration Waivers in Employment Agreements" and "SCOTUS decision in *TransUnion LLC v. Ramirez* raises hurdle for establishing standing in class action claims under the Illinois Biometric Information Privacy Act and other data privacy and consumer protection Statutes." Abby has been named to *The Best Lawyers in America*®, Mass Tort Litigation/Class Actions - Defendants, Missouri (2024).