Rediscovering Sustainable Development Law
In the Academy and In Practice

PROGRAM ABSTRACT: This half-day conference explores the emergence of complex sustainable development practices in communities, law firms, and government programs from the federal to municipal level. Learn how sustainability draws together affordable housing, environmental protection, economic development, and climate change mitigation. In government programs, it integrates initiatives from HUD, EPA, and DOT, which are instrumental in helping with local green building efforts, sustainable neighborhoods, and transportation strategies. The 40-year history of sustainable development law will serve as the backdrop for presentations on its modern and practical applications.

AGENDA

October 22, 2010

8:30 – 9:00  Arrival & Registration

9:00 – 9:15  Welcoming Remarks
             John R. Nolon, Professor of Law, Pace Law School; Counsel, Land Use Law Center and Theodore W. Kheel Center on the Resolution of Environmental Interest Disputes

9:15 – 9:30  Opening Address:
             “Sustainability at the Top: Federal Laws and Programs”
             Congresswoman Nita Lowey

9:30 – 10:15 Keynote Address
             “Law for Sustainability: Meeting the Challenge of Our Generation”
             John C. Dernbach, Distinguished Professor of Law, Director, Environmental Law Center, Widener Law School
             Sustainable development provides a framework for humans to live and prosper in harmony with nature rather than, as we have for centuries, at nature’s expense. But it does not now have an adequate or supportive legal foundation. If we are to make significant progress toward a sustainable society, much less achieve sustainability, we will need to develop and implement laws and legal institutions that do not now exist, or exist in a much different form. That is the challenge to this generation of lawyers.

10:15 – 10:30  Break

10:30 – 11:00  Session 1: Local Sustainable Development Initiatives
             “Climate Change and Sustainable Development Law in a Nutshell”
Patricia E. Salkin, Raymond & Ella Smith Distinguished Professor of Law; Associate Dean & Director, Government Law Center, Albany Law School
Professor Salkin will draw from her forthcoming publication, co-authored by Professor Nolon, to illustrate the numerous local sustainable development initiatives that local governments are undertaking, including green buildings, solar facilities, wind energy generation, transportation oriented development, and green infrastructure, among others.

11:00 – 11:30  Session 2: Practice
“The Recent Emergence of Sustainable Development Law in Practice”
Daniel A. Spitzer, Esq. Partner of Hodgson Russ LLP
As counselors to businesses and governments, lawyers are in a unique position to influence their clients on matters of sustainability. He will discuss the situations in which the legal profession is presented opportunities to advance sustainable development behavior by its clients, and the obstacles to pursuing those goals, illustrated by his ground breaking work in using the State Environmental Quality Review Act to evaluate and mitigate a projects impact on climate change.

11:30 – 12:15  Session 3: Local Governance
“How Local Leaders Help: Creating the Human Infrastructure for Collaborative Decision-Making at the Local Level”
Jessica A. Bacher, Adjunct Professor of Law, Pace Law School; Managing Director, Land Use Law Center and Kheel Center
Tiffany B. Zezula, Managing Director, Land Use Law Center and Kheel Center
This session will discuss the importance of building a collaborative process around sustainable development initiatives being considered by municipal leaders. Building an alliance of local leaders who are engaged and educated regarding the tools and techniques of land use law, facilitation, and collaborative decision-making can help, indeed may be necessary, to implement change on the ground. Presenters will discuss the strategy used by the Land Use Law Center and Kheel Center in creating a network of leaders through its training programs and forums. The critical role of lawyers in participating in these collaborations will be discussed.

12:15 – 12:30  Closing Remarks

12:30 – 1:30  Kheel Lunch Address: Using Media to Forge Agreements & Inspire Action
“Avoiding ‘Blah, Blah, Blah, Bang’”
Andrew C. Revkin, Senior Fellow of Environmental Understanding, Pace Academy for Applied Environmental Studies, New York Times Dot Earth Blog
The implosion of specialized journalism, explosion of polarizing commentary and disinformation, and a general lack of understanding of science and technology are creating hurdles to effective discourse on the entwined climate and energy challenges confronting society. Andrew Revkin, longtime environmental journalist, describes various steps - many using the Web - that could help forge agreement, and action.

Event co-sponsored by
Pace Law School Center for Environmental Legal Studies; Pace Energy and Climate Center;
Pace University Academy for Applied Environmental Studies; Pace Law School Real Estate and Land Use Law Society; and
Pace Law School Environmental Law Society