

- [Attorneys](#)
- [Practices](#)
- [The Firm](#)
- [Diversity](#)
- [Careers](#)
- [News & Events](#)
- [Offices](#)
- [Home](#)
- [Login](#)



Practices & Industries

Practices

Railroad and Mass Transportation

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Railroads in the Pacific Northwest face challenges confronting the entire transportation industry. Freight and passenger volumes remain flat as fuel prices climb dramatically. Railroads make strenuous efforts to improve workforce productivity, but must also be able to handle surges in capacity. Federal and state regulations governing railroad operations continue to grow in number and complexity. And a volatile national economy remains railroads' most formidable wildcard.

Likewise, another wheel of the transportation industry – mass transit, also with a strong Northwest presence – faces pressures related to rising fuel, land and equipment costs. While railroads are considered a backbone of the nation's transportation infrastructure, mass transit regularly meets with more public and governmental scrutiny that can potentially inflate approval, construction and regulatory costs.

Region's Most Experienced Attorneys in Railroad, Transit Law

Lane Powell represents some of the world's most prominent freight and passenger railroads, including Amtrak, Union Pacific Railroad Company, BNSF Railway Company and the Alaska Railroad Company. Its range of clients in the industry includes railroads, intermodal operators, marine operators and builders, commuter rail and regional transit entities.

Lane Powell's Railroad and Mass Transit Law attorneys form the largest and most experienced industry-focused team in the Northwest. As the firm with the longest history of representing railroads in the region, Lane Powell's level of service has evolved with the industry to offer the most capable and comprehensive legal guidance in everything from condemnation proceedings to labor issues and complex litigation.

Lane Powell also serves a leading role in the region's most innovative mass transit projects. For example, Lane Powell attorneys were instrumental in achieving a six-mile light rail line from downtown Portland to the Portland International Airport, fully integrated into the metropolitan public transportation system. Financed primarily through the transfer of trackside property development rights to the private developer who constructed the line, the project was developed without new taxes or federal funds.

Lane Powell also is the go-to law firm for complex transactions and cases for Sound Transit, the mass transit service for Central Puget Sound.

Extensive Record of Successful Representation

Lane Powell's attorneys have successfully defended each of the Firm's railroad clients in Federal Employers Liability Act ("FELA") litigation. With extensive trial experience in state and federal courts throughout the Northwest — as well as in administrative hearings before governmental and regulatory agencies — Lane Powell attorneys have successfully handled:

- Grade crossing and trespassing incidents
- Commercial, personal injury and wrongful death litigation
- Condemnations
- Freight damage claims

- Environmental claims and regulatory matters
- Employment law proceedings
- Asbestos-related claims
- Administrative proceedings
- Construction law claims, including freight claims, vendor disputes and contract claims

With extensive and proven knowledge of transportation law and regulatory requirements, Lane Powell attorneys work with clients to identify and implement solutions without the necessity of court action. In fact, Lane Powell is involved in a major initiative with a railroad client to help the company more efficiently handle litigation on a national scale.

In cases where litigation is in the client's best interest, however, Lane Powell provides a skilled and aggressive litigation team that has earned the respect of the transportation industry.

Committed to Remaining Current on Industry Issues

Lane Powell attorneys actively participate in key industry associations to remain knowledgeable of current and emerging issues facing the railroad and mass transit industry. These groups include:

- National Association of Railroad Trial Counsel at regional and national levels
- Association of Transportation Law Practitioners
- Transportation Law and Logistics section of the American Bar Association

Lane Powell remains poised to handle the full spectrum of railroad and mass transit legal challenges, from passenger injury and freight damage claims, to employment and environmental law matters, administrative and regulatory proceedings.



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