



ENVIRONMENTAL LAW & POLICY CENTER

Protecting the Midwest's Environment and Natural Heritage

Howard A. Learner

President and Executive Director, Environmental Law & Policy Center

Howard A. Learner is an experienced public interest litigation attorney serving as the President and Executive Director of the Environmental Law & Policy Center – the Midwest's premier environmental legal advocacy and eco-business innovation organization, and among the nation's leaders. Mr. Learner is responsible for the overall strategic leadership, policy direction, and financial platform of ELPC's successful work promoting clean energy development solutions to climate change problems, advancing transportation innovations and improvements, and preserving the Midwest's valued natural resources and heritage.

ELPC combines successful strategic legal and policy advocacy with its core premise that environmental progress, job creation, and economic growth can be achieved together. Mr. Learner and his multidisciplinary staff put this sustainability policy vision into practice by building diverse coalitions to grow the "green economy" with innovative solutions. These coalitions create new jobs, spur economic growth, and improve the environment and public health. Learner and his team led the organizational growth and development of ELPC from a start-up to a leading regional and nationally-influential group with 45 staff and a \$8.3 million budget.

Mr. Learner founded ELPC in 1993 as an entrepreneurial start-up following his work as the General Counsel for Business and Professional People for the Public Interest, which specializes in policy advocacy and complex environmental, energy, economic development and civil rights litigation in federal and state courts. Mr. Learner began his legal career as a civil rights attorney focusing on housing issues, neighborhood revitalization, and advancing economic inclusion for diverse communities. He served as a Senior Advisor for Energy and Environmental Issues for President Barack Obama in his successful Presidential campaign in 2007 - 2008.

Much of Mr. Learner's work has concentrated on developing and advocating for new directions on environmental and energy policy issues. ELPC has been a leader in helping states and local municipalities develop clean renewable energy and energy efficiency efforts. Not only does this work help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and pollution from fossil fuel power plants, but it also helps to create jobs across the Midwest and advance economic growth. With a big picture perspective of the region, ELPC has helped accelerate sustainable transportation and land use strategies that make sense for the taxpayers and support the environment, including regional efforts to develop a high-speed rail network. Mr. Learner has also worked hard to protect the Great Lakes and the Midwest's wild and natural places – forests, waters, and biodiversity.

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Mr. Learner has successfully represented environmental, clean energy, and community organizations in complex civil litigation in the federal and state courts and before regulatory agencies. He has led the team into some powerful wins over the years. When Peabody Energy went into bankruptcy without cleaning up their old retiring coal plants, ELPC fought to make sure that money was set aside so taxpayers weren't left with the bill. When Lake Erie was threatened with dangerous algae blooms from agricultural runoff, ELPC got the lake officially declared "impaired," with continued efforts for full Ohio cleanup. In Chicago, Mr. Learner has fought to renovate the underground Pedway system, to improve infrastructure for pedestrians and transit users. Thanks to ELPC and coalition partners, Illinois passed new Renewable Energy Standards that have ushered in a solar boom since 2016 with specific support for low-income communities. Learner served as the lead attorney for a coalition of Illinois consumer organizations and government agencies in litigating and, then, negotiating a settlement with Commonwealth Edison on complicated rate issues that produced more than \$2 billion of refunds – the largest ever in the U.S.

Mr. Learner serves as: Treasurer of the (Cook County) Forest Preserves Foundation and on the Board of Directors of Citizens Action–Illinois. He has served on: Illinois Executive Ethics Commission, Executive Committee of the Board of the Environmental Law Institute, Board of Directors of the American Council On Renewable Energy, Board and Chair of the Grantmaking Committee of the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation, and Vice and Chair of the National Advisory Council for Environmental Policy and Technology (NACEPT), appointed by the U.S. EPA Administrator.

Mr. Learner received the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois–Federal Bar Association's Award for Excellence in Pro Bono and Public Interest Service, Leadership Greater Chicago's Distinguished Leadership Fellow Award for the 25th Anniversary, *Chicago Magazine's* Green Leader Award, and U.S. Green Building Council – Chicago Chapter's Natural Leader Award – "Intent to Matter". He also received: Public Interest Law Initiative's Distinguished Public Service Award, American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy's National Champion of Energy Efficiency Award for Energy Policy, and the American Wind Energy Association's National Wind Energy Advocacy Award. He is in *Crain's Chicago Business'* "Who's Who in Chicago Business" (1997 – present) and is a Member of the Economic Club of Chicago.

Mr. Learner received his J.D. from Harvard Law School (1980) and B.A. (Honors) from the University of Michigan (1976). He is an (Adjunct) Professor at the University of Michigan Law School and Northwestern University Law School teaching advanced seminars on energy law and climate change policy and on environmental law and sustainable development. He is married to Lauren Rosenthal, an attorney, and they live in the Edgewater neighborhood of Chicago.