

Former FCC Legal Advisor Edward 'Smitty' Smith joins DLA Piper

DLA Piper announced that Edward "Smitty" Smith, former legal advisor to past Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Chairman Tom Wheeler, has joined the firm's Telecommunication practice, part of the firm's global Intellectual Property and Technology practice, as a partner in the Washington, DC office.

Smith recently was responsible for advising the chairman of the FCC on wireless telecommunications, engineering and technology, and consumer affairs. In this role, he led legal and policy teams on major issues involving the cutting edge of technological development. Smith oversaw FCC policymaking on such issues as 5G technology, satellites, spectrum sharing, autonomous vehicle communications, small-cell deployment, and unmanned aviation systems. Previously, Smith was Chief of Staff and Senior Counsel of the FCC's Incentive Auction Task Force, a multibillion-dollar radio spectrum allocation project.

Prior to joining the FCC, Smith was special advisor at the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration. As special advisor, Smith launched the agency's State Broadband Data and Development Grant Program, a \$350 million grant program to improve the quality of broadband data nationwide. Smith also helped lead the agency's Broadband Technology Opportunities Program, a \$4.7 billion effort to extend and develop services to reach rural and underserved areas, worked to improve wireless broadband access for public safety agencies, and helped provide financial assistance to low-income families transitioning from analog to digital television.

At DLA Piper, Smith will focus his practice on telecom matters and advise clients on the full range of issues in the wireless, broadband and satellite sectors.

“Smitty brings experience, expertise and leadership that will further strengthen the accomplished telecom team we’ve built,” said Michael Senkowski, co-chair of DLA Piper’s Telecommunication practice. “He has an excellent reputation for his government service and his strong knowledge of the telecommunications and technology sectors will be a great benefit to our clients.”

“Given the changes in Washington, there’s a great deal of uncertainty about the regulatory environment facing companies in the years ahead,” said Jeff Lehrer, managing partner of DLA Piper’s Washington, DC, office. “Adding Smitty bolsters a team that already had a firm understanding of the industry and the FCC, which today is unquestionably as important, if not more important, than it’s been at any point in recent years.”

Smith received his J.D. from Harvard Law School and his B.A. from Brown University.

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