

SBSB Law & Eastham Announce Merger

A New Era: SBSB Law and Eastham Announce Merger

Firms join forces to create legal powerhouse in Maritime and Catastrophic Claims

HOUSTON – Schouest, Bamdas, Soshea & BenMaier PLLC, or SBSB Law, and Eastham, Watson, Dale & Forney, LLP announced today they have finalized a merger that brings together two of the most highly respected law firms in the country. The merger will combine Eastham's renowned Maritime and Catastrophic Claims practice with SBSB's highly respected Maritime, Longshore, Defense Base Act, and Insurance Defense practices, to create a legal powerhouse.

In the Maritime sector, the new firm, which operates as SBSB Eastham, combines SBSB's deep bench of maritime and trial lawyers with Eastham's decades-long history as a leader in Admiralty and Maritime law.

"Merging our firms allows us to leverage the expertise and depth of experience of both firms," said SBSB Founder and Managing Partner John Schouest, who leads the combined firm. "The result is a team that is even more formidable. When it comes to maritime groups, I don't know of any other with this much experience."

"We are very excited to be joining forces with SBSB," said SBSB Eastham Partner Robert L. Klawetter. "Not only will we be working with an outstanding group of lawyers, but we are also thrilled to be able to provide our clients with the experience, outstanding attorneys and resources this merger provides."

SBSB Eastham partner Christina Schovajsa added, "We are confident that Clarence Eastham would be very pleased to see the legacy of the firm he founded 82 years ago continue."

In just seven years, SBSB Law has become one of the nation's

leading firms in Admiralty and Maritime law, among other areas. The firm's partners have decades of Admiralty and Maritime experience representing a wide array of clients, including activities associated with inland waterways, brown water commerce, offshore exploration and production, international and Jones Act shipping, and international cruise lines. The firm is also known for its deep bench of highly skilled litigators who handle a wide variety of defense work, from Defense Base Act and Longshore claims, to Class Action Defense, Commercial Litigation, General Liability, Trucking and Insurance.

Established in 1939, Eastham routinely acts on behalf of the world's leading Protection & Indemnity Clubs and other liability underwriters and has played a key role in representing parties in virtually all of the major maritime disasters on the Texas Gulf Coast for decades. It provides legal services to a wide variety of industries, including domestic and international shipping companies, the offshore drilling industry, inland towing companies, and intermodal equipment providers and freight brokers.

"The practice of maritime law is one of our cornerstones," said Susan Noe Wilson, SBSB Eastham Partner and Head of Litigation. "While SBSB's current maritime work is primarily brown water – energy field, oil and gas, waterways – Eastham is primarily a blue water maritime firm. Combining the two makes this a very good marriage for all involved, especially our clients."

The new firm's key practice areas include Admiralty and Maritime, Defense Base Act, Longshore, Business and Commercial Litigation, Business Transactions, Personal Injury Defense, Energy, Environmental and Toxic Torts, Transportation and Trucking, General Liability, Insurance, Labor and Employment, Federal and State Workers' Compensation, Premises Liability, Arbitration, and Appellate.

In all, SBSB Eastham has approximately 110 lawyers in six cities across the country – Houston, Corpus Christi, New Orleans, Chicago, Boca Raton, and Milwaukee.

SBSB Eastham is a group of experienced attorneys who have come together to form a law firm focused on client needs. The firm's goal is to be the go-to resource at every stage of the legal process, bringing deeper experience, deeper commitment, and deeper insights to help solve the most complex issues. In consultation or in the courtroom, the firm will aggressively pursue a client's best interests. For more information about the firm and its team of attorneys, visit www.sbsb-eastham.com.

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