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ELI makes law work for people, places, and the planet

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History of the Environmental Law Institute

The Institute traces its origins to a national conference on environmental law held at the Airlie House in Virginia in September 1969. For the first time, a large group of lawyers, practitioners, and teachers from all parts of the country had gathered to discuss the emerging field of environmental law. The major proposal presented at the conference was a prospectus for an Environmental Law Reporter. A monthly publication was proposed that would collect environmental statutes, regulations, court decisions and other documents, and would carefully analyze developments in the field. The conferees warmly endorsed the prospectus, signaling the beginning of a successful effort to secure Ford Foundation funding for the Environmental Law Reporter, within the framework of a new institute.

Guided by its founders, the Conservation Foundation and the Public Law Education Institute, the Environmental Law Institute was incorporated on December 22, 1969 as a 501(c)(3) organization. Publication of the [Environmental Law Reporter](#) (ELR) began in

January 1971. ELR has since become a major resource for those concerned with environmental law, and is the mainstay of the Institute's publications divisions, which includes books, newsletters and conference manuals.

In October 1970, the Institute co-sponsored its first education program. Since then the Institute has responded to the critical need for research on institutional decision making and implementation of environmental policy. ELI has expanded to include extensive research projects, workshops, and training programs nationally and internationally.

Upcoming Events

August 26, 2025

[California Climate Disclosures: No Regrets Preparation](#)

August 27, 2025

[Chemical Recycling: More Pollution? Or a Sustainability Solution for Plastic?](#)

September 18, 2025

[PFAS Briefing: Material Innovation and PFAS](#)

September 25, 2025

[Community Lawyering for Environmental Justice Part 13: Energy Affordability and the Power of Community Voices](#)

September 30, 2025

[Annual Supreme Court Review & Preview \(2025\)](#)

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