

## MVP: Gibson Dunn's Stacie B. Fletcher

By Tom Lotshaw

*Law360 (October 11, 2023, 1:19 PM EDT)* -- Stacie B. Fletcher of Gibson Dunn & Crutcher LLP represented Mercedes-Benz in its win against a Florida county's emission control tampering suit and negotiated enforcement action resolutions for Tesoro Refining & Marketing Co. and Matador Resources Co., earning her a spot among Law360's 2023 Environmental MVPs.

### *Her biggest accomplishments of the year:*

Fletcher was lead counsel for Mercedes-Benz, the former Daimler AG, and a primary negotiator of an approximately \$1.5 billion settlement they reached with the federal government and California that was finalized in March 2021 in the wake of Volkswagen's diesel emissions cheating scandal.

She also successfully defended the Mercedes-Benz companies against a follow-up suit the Environmental Protection Commission of Hillsborough County filed, claiming the companies violated rules prohibiting emission control tampering.

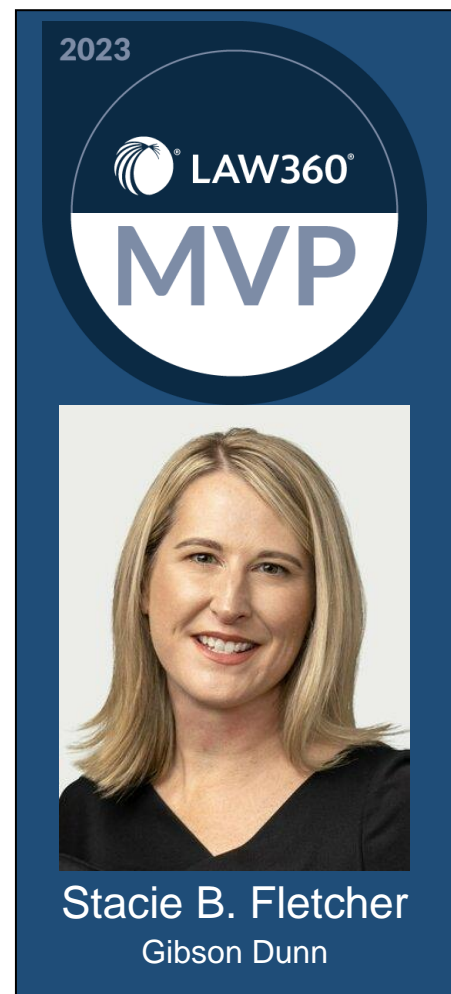
The suit involved "interesting and novel issues on the scope of Clean Air Act preemption as applied to state and local anti-tampering laws," said Fletcher, who co-led the team representing Mercedes-Benz.

A Florida federal judge ultimately dismissed Hillsborough County's fourth amended complaint with prejudice in September 2022, ruling it had failed to state a plausible claim in a decision that the Eleventh Circuit affirmed in July.

Fletcher is also proud of some enforcement resolutions reached this year.

She was lead counsel for Marathon Petroleum Corp. — as the successor to Tesoro Refinery & Marketing — in an action claiming violations of a consent decree for a petroleum refinery in Martinez, California. Fletcher led negotiation of a settlement and decree modification allowing the company to convert the refinery into a renewable fuels plant.

She also defended energy company Matador Resources against a joint U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and New Mexico enforcement action related to emissions from storage vessels at a number of production wells.



The resolution involved a favorable penalty, according to Gibson Dunn, and included technology and operational improvements for the company to reduce emissions, with one of the first supplemental environmental projects to be approved following the Biden administration's reintroduction of that policy.

"We were pleased to have [the supplemental environmental project] approved as part of that resolution," Fletcher said.

***Why she's an environmental attorney:***

Fletcher, who co-chairs Gibson Dunn's environmental litigation and mass tort practice group, said she appreciates how environmental law regularly provides her with chances to learn.

"In environmental law we have the opportunity to learn about a wide variety of operations, so with each case we're learning about a new industry or a new type of manufacturing or production, and it really keeps our jobs interesting. I love that aspect of environmental law," she said.

"I also think that the environmental bar is small, and there is a good sense of collegiality among fellow environmental attorneys, including at government agencies, which also makes it a real pleasure to practice in this area," Fletcher added.

***What motivates her:***

Fletcher said providing the best possible service for clients is a core Gibson Dunn value and one of her biggest motivators. The camaraderie and energy that come along with having "a fantastic team" are also something that drives her.

"We're very lucky to have a strong and close-knit group of environmental practitioners here at Gibson Dunn, so that is definitely part of what motivates me," Fletcher said, with the firm having "a tremendously talented team who really make it a pleasure to work on these cases."

***Her advice for junior attorneys:***

"One, recognizing that client service is a centerpiece of the firm's mission, and then two, finding a practice group and a group of attorneys you really enjoy practicing with," Fletcher advised younger attorneys.

"When you find a practice area or a group that you work particularly well with, that you really enjoy," she added. "It's just following your passion. I think it will make the overall practice of law enjoyable and ultimately will make you more successful in the long run."

*--As told to Tom Lotshaw*

*Law360's MVPs of the Year are attorneys who have distinguished themselves from their peers over the past year through high-stakes litigation, record-breaking deals, and complex global matters. A team of Law360 editors selected the 2023 MVP winners after reviewing more than 900 submissions.*