

PARTNER AND DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

Michael Brain

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Washington, D.C.

Michael Brain is a Director of Best Best & Krieger LLP's (BBK) Government Affairs practice group and Partner in BBK's Environment & Natural Resources Law practice group. He uses his extensive federal water policy experience to counsel clients facing water infrastructure challenges, offering keen insights into budget and appropriations, water resources, energy and environment issues.

Prior to joining BBK, Michael served in the senior leadership of U.S. Department of the Interior (Interior) and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation). As Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Water and Science at Interior, Michael advised the Secretary of the Interior on matters of water and science policy and was responsible for Reclamation and the U.S. Geological Survey. As Reclamation's Deputy Commissioner, Michael worked to increase resiliency and improve the Nation's western water infrastructure through significant strategic federal investment and targeted policy measures. While serving at Interior, Michael championed cross-agency coordination of federal water policy programs to ensure efficient implementation and the inclusion of stakeholder priorities.

Michael also spent over a decade working in senior roles at the U.S. House of Representatives. As Professional Staff for the House Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee, he crafted funding legislation and oversaw budgets for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) and Reclamation and built a bipartisan reputation working with congressional offices and stakeholders to address their needs. He also drafted authorizing legislation for the Corps and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as Counsel for the House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment. In these roles he was responsible for working with Members of Congress their staff, and other stakeholders, on key policy initiatives related to national water infrastructure programs.

CORE PRACTICES

- Government Affairs
- Environmental Law & Natural Resources
- Native American Law
- Water
- Water Quality
- Data Centers & AI Infrastructure
- Airports

EDUCATION & ADMISSIONS

Education

Saint Louis University School of Law, J.D., concentration in urban development & environmental law

Boston College, B.A., political science, environmental studies

Outside of the office, Michael enjoys spending time with his wife, Shawn, and their four children.

Thought Leadership

Publications

- "Trump Administration Releases Supplemental Proposal to Further Amend Waters of the United States Subject to Federal Jurisdiction," *PublicCEO*, Sept. 11, 2026
- “EPA Seeks Public Comment on Recently Proposed PFAS Drinking Water Rule Revisions,” *PublicCEO*, June 3, 2026
- “Agencies Release Revised WOTUS Proposed Rule, Open 45-day Public Comment Period,” *PublicCEO*, Dec. 1, 2025

Presentations

- "Inside Washington DC Panel," National Water Resources Association, Annual Conference and Federal Advocacy Forum, Nov. 5, 2026
- "Allocating Resources to Critical Water Systems," Aspen Institute and Duke’s Nicholas Institute for Energy, Environment and Sustainability, The Aspen - Nicholas Water Forum, Oct. 13, 2026
- "Let’s Talk Water: Follow the (Federal) Money," Colorado Water Congress, Webinar, April 29, 2026
- "Navigating the Corps and Beyond: Inside Baseball on How Projects Get Built," National Waterways Conference, 2026 Legislative Summit, April 22, 2026
- "Water Under the Dome: D.C. Insights on the Legislative and Policy Currents Shaping the West," Mid-Pacific Region Water Users Conference, Jan. 29, 2026
- "A Watershed Moment: Navigating Infrastructure Funding in a Shifting Federal Landscape," Association of California Water Agencies, Fall Conference, Dec. 4, 2025
- "Inside Washington," NWRA Annual Conference, Nov. 6, 2025
- “Nexus of Energy and Water Sustainability Coordination,” National Academies Enabling DOE Regional Energy-Water Technology Pilots First Meeting, January 2025
- “White House Clean Water Summit,” Participant, April, 2024
- “Nation-to-Nation Talks with Tribal Agency and Agency Leadership,” White House Tribal Nations Summit, December 2023
- “Funding the Future of Water,” Colorado River Water Users Association, December 2022