

Partner Siobhan Cole Argues in First-Ever Telephonic Hearing of the En Banc D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals

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White and Williams Partner Siobhan Cole, in unprecedented circumstances, argued before the en banc D.C. Circuit on April 27, 2020. The hearing was unique in that it was the first to be held telephonically, due to stay-at-home orders related to COVID-19. Siobhan leads a Commercial Litigation team representing landowners challenging the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).

"I was told I was the guinea pig. It was the test run," Siobhan told *CNN* following the hearing.

While 30 minutes were reserved per side, judges questioned Siobhan for more than two full hours in the first round of argument, which she handled from her bedroom while her husband and two small children were also home.

"The judges were very respectful of each other, and I was never bombarded with overlapping questions," she said, but admitted the non-traditional format required increased flexibility. "Normally, if one judge asks you about a topic, then another follows up," Cole observed. "But with the judges taking turns, I had to go back and forth with different issues."

The hearing ultimately lasted about three-and-a-half hours. "To be sharp and answer that many questions ... and then to spend time listening to the questions and answers to the other side," Cole said, "was certainly exhausting."

The D.C. Circuit hearings were a preview for the Supreme Court of the United States, which began its first-ever livestreamed arguments on Monday, May 4, one week after Siobhan's hearing. [Click here to read the full article from *CNN*.](#)

KEY ATTORNEYS

Siobhan K. Cole

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