

Rising Star: Mayer Brown's Avi Kupfer

By Jack McLoone

Law360 (August 12, 2025, 4:00 PM EDT) -- Avi Kupfer of Mayer Brown LLP has used his unique governmental experience as a litigator and administrator to, as a private practitioner, help clients such as the U.S. Postal Service navigate the intricacies of administrative law, earning him a spot among the environmental law practitioners under age 40 honored by Law360 as Rising Stars.

The biggest case of his career:

Kupfer said he served as lead counsel for the USPS in a trio of suits — spanning both coasts — by different coalitions of attorneys general, the United Auto Workers, and environmental nonprofits over plans to update 106,000 delivery vehicles, arguing the Postal Service violated the National Environmental Policy Act. The case required Kupfer to secure a stay as the USPS increased its planned minimum of electric vehicles up to over 60% of the updated fleet, and then defend the amended decision, which ultimately resulted in all three cases being dropped.

"There was no guarantee that we were going to be able to thread that needle, and it created some procedural complexities that were interesting and not the easiest to navigate at times," Kupfer said.

"Getting to work on a case that has implications for really everyone in the country, and how they interact with the federal government was a really rewarding experience," he said.

His proudest moment as an attorney:

Kupfer said one of his proudest moments came before he was at Mayer Brown, during his nearly five years as an appellate attorney in the U.S. Department of Justice's Environment and Natural Resources Division. Serving as lead counsel in an appeal before the Tenth Circuit, Kupfer championed a decision by the U.S. Department of the Interior to take land into trust in Oklahoma for a

2025



Avi Kupfer
Mayer Brown

Age: 37

Home base: New York

Position: Partner

Law school: University of Michigan Law School

First job after law school: Clerk for U.S. Circuit Judge Danny J. Boggs

landless federally recognized tribe, the Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians, after the government received an unfavorable district court ruling. He ultimately secured a reversal from the appellate court, allowing the land to be taken into trust.

"It was very rewarding to experience the real-world impacts of arguing an appeal and pulling out a win that allowed this tribe to secure its future, and then to talk directly with tribal leadership and just see how appreciative they were of the government's decision and the Justice Department's defense of that decision," Kupfer said. "It's not every case where an attorney is defending a decision where you get to directly meet the folks who are the beneficiaries of the litigation."

Why he became an environmental attorney:

Kupfer said working in environmental and land-use law allows him to work on cases with real-world implications — his clients include those like General Motors, whom he assisted with securing the latest known source of lithium in the U.S. — while also marrying an interest he developed in the Administrative Procedure Act and the complex network of precedent set by case law, including from the Supreme Court.

"It's an evolving area of law that is in the news a lot, has real-world implications and interesting legal questions with real world implications," Kupfer said.

Now working in private practice, Kupfer said he gets to work on a broader set of environmental issues rather than focusing on defending federal agency decisions covering rulemaking and land management as he did at the DOJ.

"In private practice, I've gotten to work not only on those issues, but a whole host of administrative law and environmental issues," he said. "It's really been a lot of fun to help clients deal with problems all over the board on federal regulatory issues, including environmental issues."

Another notable case:

Kupfer has also spent time working pro bono to represent Planned Parenthood patients seeking to maintain access to services through Medicaid. While Congress wrote into law that those on Medicaid should have access to care from providers of their choosing, it's up to the legal community to ensure that guarantee remains in place, he said.

"Getting to play a small role in making sure that patients have access to the care that Congress wanted to ensure they were provided was a really important cause for me," he said.

How he thinks his practice will change in the next 10 years:

The long-term impacts of the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark decisions touching on administrative law — such as *Loper Bright Enterprises v. Raimondo*, *Corner Post v. Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System* and *Trump v. CASA* — are still uncertain, beyond expecting their impact to be felt for decades, Kupfer said.

"It remains to be seen exactly how the law is going to develop in response to these decisions and how federal agencies are going to modify their decision-making in response to *Loper* and other Supreme Court decisions on agency actions," he said.

As for the effects of climate change on environmental law, Kupfer said he's already seeing clients take up plans for the green energy transition and related projects with an eye toward the long term.

"In some ways, working on environmental land-use law puts you at the forefront of these energy transition projects that lots of businesses in the United States are investing in," he said.

--As told to Jack McLoone. Editing by Drashti Mehta.

Law360's Rising Stars are attorneys under 40 whose legal accomplishments belie their age. A team of Law360 editors selected the 2025 Rising Stars winners after reviewing more than 1,100 submissions. Attorneys had to be under 40 as of April 30, 2025, to be eligible for this year's award.

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