

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

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Cambridge, MA 02138

August 23, 2010

NAME

Natural Resources Section
Environment and Natural Resources Division
United States Department of Justice
P.O. Box 23986
Washington, D.C. 20026-3986

Dear NAME,

I am in my second year at Harvard Law School, and am interested in volunteering for the Department of Justice's Environment and Natural Resources Division next summer, specifically in the Natural Resources Section. I have submitted my application materials to ENRD's central contact, and wanted to write to you directly to explain my interest in the Natural Resources Section.

In assisting the litigators of the Environmental Protection Division of the California Attorney General's Office this past summer, I have experienced—and thrived on—the complexity of environmental litigation, and the responsibility of representing the government and its people. One of many projects which found me happily working past regular business hours was assisting a state hazardous waste enforcement action. The case required me to explore not only Massachusetts' spill regulations, but also bankruptcy and corporate law. It also taught me to put into practice my knowledge of Civil Procedure, a subject in which I was named Dean's Scholar. I learned that I find the myriad substantive and procedural issues that cross-cut environmental litigation exhilarating.

My summer experience working under the state Clean Air Act, Endangered Species Act, Hazardous Material Release Act, Oil Spill Prevention Act, and others also showed me that I enjoy balancing work under numerous legal regimes—one of many reasons I find the Natural Resource Section so appealing. I believe that my detail-oriented nature, further honed as a technical editor for the *Environmental Law Review* and as a teaching assistant for First Year Legal Research and Writing, makes me particularly adaptable to the task of engaging with the various statutory regimes, geographic areas, and courts with which your Section works. Additionally, your Section's mission of representing the government's interest in protecting and effectively managing resources is one to which I am devoted. When I spoke to Edward Passarelli about his work with your Section, he talked animatedly about the Asian carp invasion in the Great Lakes—enthusiasm I remembered when I nervously monitored the entrance of the invasive Japanese beetle to California this summer. As an undergraduate student of geology, I have devoted years to understanding the many factors that can impact ecosystems, and wish to devote many more to litigating effective ways to protect them.

In addition to my genuine interest in your Section's work, I would bring to your Section writing and research skills I have developed as a senior editor for the *Harvard Law and Policy Review* and on the *Environmental Law Review*. I will continue to sharpen my legal writing skills—for which I was recognized as one of the outstanding brief writers in my first-year writing class—as a teaching assistant for that class. This role, along with my service on the executive board of Harvard's Environmental Law Society, will also allow me to further hone my communication skills, which I initially developed as a nationally-ranked impromptu public speaker.

I know that spending this summer with the Natural Resources Section would offer an invaluable opportunity to see how attorneys use these skills to represent the government's interest in protecting its resources. Thank you in advance for your time. I will contact you in the coming weeks to see if there is anything else you need from me.

Sincerely,

Mary Smith