GRAYROBINSON



Ryan E. Matthews

Government Affairs and Lobbying Deputy Section Chair
Shareholder

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Focus

- Government Affairs and Lobbying
- Environmental and Sustainability Law
- Government
- Utilities

Solution-oriented government lawyer known for deep agency expertise in environmental, utilities, and water supply issues. Former Secretary of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

Ryan Matthews helps clients address the distinct pain points of Florida's regulatory and legislative landscape with a focus on environmental, land use, and local government issues. A trusted advocate with an insider's point of view, he is a recognized authority in environmental policy related to natural resources, with broadly developed expertise in water future and scarcity concerns. He represents some of the largest electric, water, and wastewater utility companies in Florida, dozens of individual local governments, statewide associations, and top private sector corporations navigating the environmental resource permitting process.

Ryan embraces client challenges with a unique understanding of how local governmental frameworks intersect with regulated interests and the business community. Some of the most notable public and private players in the state turn to him again and again for his influential decision-making and ability to bridge communication gaps, break down barriers, and shepherd them through thorny legal, administrative, and regulatory challenges. He is a current state lobbyist for the Florida Association of Counties, Florida League of Cities, and Florida Municipal Electric Association, among others.

Before joining GrayRobinson, Ryan served as the Secretary of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) under the Rick Scott Administration, as well as in the general counsel and legislative affairs offices of the Florida League of Cities. He often teams with GrayRobinson colleagues in the corporate, land use, and real estate practices to provide the full complement of advisory services and solutions for clients.

Notable Work

- Served as Secretary of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) under the Rick Scott Administration.
- Oversaw 3,000 employees and a $1.6 billion budget to protect Florida's natural resources.

- Led early efforts to delegate the Clean Water Act Section 404 program to the State of Florida, only the third state in the nation to achieve such delegation.
- Served as Deputy Secretary for Regulatory Programs at the Florida DEP.
- Oversaw the air, water, and waste regulatory divisions of the Florida DEP, which issue thousands of permits per year to regulated interests and the business community in Florida.
- Led the coordination and implementation of statewide water policy, including oversight authority of Florida's five water management districts.
- Played a critical role in successfully pursuing recurring funding for Alternative Water Supply projects in Governor Scott's recommended budget.
- Increased funding for water quality monitoring, TMDLs, and springs while serving as Chair of the Central Florida Water Initiative, which focuses on finding long-term solutions to groundwater withdrawals in the Central Florida region.

Insights

- "GrayRobinson 2026 Virtual Legislative Session Wrap-Up," July 28, 2026
- "GrayRobinson 2026 Legislative Session Wrap-Up," Tampa, April 29, 2026
- "GrayRobinson 2024 Legislative Session Wrap-Up," Jacksonville, April 3, 2024
- "GrayRobinson 2024 Legislative Session Wrap-Up," Tampa, April 2, 2024
- "Florida's environment remains a fiscal focus," *Florida Specifier*, July 6, 2023
- "GrayRobinson Environmental and Sustainability Law Team Insight: Governor DeSantis Announces Environmental Priorities through Executive Order," GrayRobinson Insight, January 12, 2023
- "Aquifer Resiliency in the Face of Existing and Emerging Challenges," 36th Annual Florida Chamber Environmental Permitting Summer School, July 20, 2022
- "The State of Electric Vehicles in Florida," Florida Municipal Electric Association 2022 Conference, July 13, 2022
- "GrayRobinson 2022 Legislative Session Wrap-Up," Gainesville, April 21, 2022
- "GrayRobinson 2022 Legislative Session Wrap-Up," Jacksonville, April 7, 2022
- "Legislative Insights - Past, Present and Future of Florida's CRAs," Redevelopment Works Podcast, February 9, 2021
- "CRA's 50 Year Anniversary," Florida League of Cities Annual Conference, August 16, 2019

Media

- "Ryan Matthews," Water For Fighting Podcast, April 3, 2023
- "A Message from the Mayor," *City of Mount Dora News*, September 2, 2022

Affiliations

- Central Florida Water Initiative (CFWI), Former Chair, Florida

Credentials

- LL.M., University of Denver Sturm College of Law, Environmental/Natural Resources Law, 2009
- J.D., Florida Coastal School of Law, 2008
- B.A., University of Florida, Political Science, 2004

Admissions

- Florida