

Robert B. Kelly

Senior Partner

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About Robert

Robert B. Kelly is a senior partner at the firm, where he is widely recognized for his expertise in spectrum policy and management. With more than 40 years of experience at the intersection of telecommunications and technology law, he chaired the firm's global Communications Practice Group for over a decade and continues to advise US and international clients on complex transactional, legislative and regulatory matters.

Bob has played a central role in two of the most significant spectrum rebanding initiatives in US history. He served as general counsel to the FCC-authorized Relocation Payment Clearinghouse for C-Band reconfiguration, and as general counsel to the 800 MHz Transition Administrator, overseeing the nationwide, multibillion-dollar reconfiguration of the 800 MHz band. Across these roles, he has designed and implemented large-scale claims review and alternative dispute resolution processes, coordinated with federal, state and local authorities, and overseen governance and oversight policies that enabled the payment of more than US\$15 billion in claims and the successful mediation of over 2,000 negotiations.

A recognized authority on intelligent transportation systems (ITS), Bob has advised public and private stakeholders on connected and autonomous vehicle technologies for more than 25 years. He was instrumental in securing the FCC's landmark allocation of 5.9 GHz spectrum for ITS and continues to counsel on related issues, including spectrum policy, cybersecurity, risk management, data privacy and investment strategy.

Bob has served on the boards of four public and private telecommunications companies. He is frequently honored for his leadership in communications and technology law, including his recent recognition in *Best Lawyers in America* (2026, Communications Law). A prolific author and speaker, he regularly contributes to leading publications and addresses national and international forums on spectrum, telecommunications and transportation innovation.

Bob is based in the firm's Washington D.C. office and is a graduate of Duke University School of Law.

Experience

- Lead counsel to the 800 MHz Transition Administrator.

- Transactional and regulatory counsel to US-based telecommunications service providers and equipment manufacturers.
- Counsel to intelligent transportation interests for more than 25 years. Matters include successful prosecution of request for a significant allocation of spectrum for ITS; representation on deployment of wireless E-911; and application of federal and state data privacy, cybersecurity, intellectual property, antitrust, commercial and tort laws to emerging intelligent transportation technologies.
- Counsel to non-US telecommunications service providers and equipment manufacturers investing in US business opportunities.
- Counsel to major participants in FCC spectrum auctions.
- Served as board member of two publicly traded and two privately held wireless companies.

Credentials

Education

- Duke University, J.D., 1981
- Duke University, A.B., *magna cum laude*, Phi Beta Kappa, 1978

Admissions

- District of Columbia, 1992
- Virginia, 1981

Courts

- U.S. Ct. of App., District of Columbia Circuit

Recognitions

- Recognized in *The Best Lawyers in America* 2023 for Communications Law

Expertise

Services

- Public Policy
- Data Privacy, Cybersecurity & Digital Assets
- Communications

Speaking Engagements and Publications

Speaking Engagements

- Panelist, "5G Wireless and the Challenges of Governance," Silicon Flatirons Association Roundtable, Washington DC, June 6, 2017.
- Moderator, "Wireless Communications in Autonomous Driving," Squire Patton Boggs, San Francisco, CA, March 23, 2017.
- Panelist, "Future of the Internet of Things in Mission Critical Applications," Silicon Flatirons Association Roundtable, Washington DC, June 22, 2016.
- Moderator, "Automotive Cyber Security," Telecommunications Industry Association Vehicle Connectivity Workshop, Washington DC, December 8, 2015.

- Moderator, Session Two "Incentive Auction Gathers Pace," International Institute of Communications (IIC) Telecommunications and Media Forum 2014, Washington DC, December 2, 2014.
- Moderator, Session AM 02, "5.9 GHz Dedicated Short Range Communications: Will there be Available Spectrum Resources at 5.9 GHz to Support DSRC Deployment?" 21st ITS World Congress, Detroit, Michigan, September 8, 2014.
- Speaker, "Spectrum Auctions –Dollars, Decisions and Dilemmas," Broadcast Education Association, BEA/NAB 2014, Las Vegas, Nevada, April 8, 2014.
- Speaker, "Property Rights in Spectrum, Water and Minerals," Silicon Flatirons Association, Boulder, Colorado, April 3, 2014.
- Moderator, Session Five "Latest Spectrum Bulletin From North America," IIC Telecommunications and Media Forum 2013, Washington DC, December 4, 2013.
- Speaker, Session ES09 "International Spectrum Allocation Policies," 20th ITS World Congress, Tokyo, Japan, October 17, 2013.
- Speaker, Panel 2, "Strategies to Promote Transition Coordination and Cost Mitigation among Broadcasters," Federal Communications Commission (FCC), Workshop on Reassignment of TV Stations after the Incentive Auction, Washington DC, September 30, 2013.
- Speaker, "Towards Dynamic Markets in Electric Power, Water, and Wireless Spectrum," Silicon Flatirons Association, Boulder, Colorado, April 23, 2013.
- Speaker "DSRC Band Spectrum Sharing," Intelligent Transportation Society of America (ITS America), Legislative Steering Committee, Washington DC, December 5, 2012.
- Speaker "DSRC Band Spectrum Sharing," ITS America, Policy and Business Council, Washington DC, December 4, 2012.
- Moderator, Session ES07, "The Growing Debate Over ITS Spectrum: A Discussion of Policy and Regulatory Imperatives," 22nd Annual Meeting & Exposition, ITS America, National Harbor, MD, May 23, 2012.
- Moderator, Session Two "Wireless Futures: How to Deliver the Full Potential," IIC Telecommunications and Media Forum 2011, Washington DC, December 14, 2011.
- Speaker, Session SS04 Next Generation Internet: ITS Integrated With Smartphone World," 18th ITS World Congress, Orlando, Florida, October 17, 2013.
- Moderator, Session Two "Meeting the Challenge of Rising Spectrum Demand," IIC Telecommunications and Media Forum 2011, Washington DC, December 7, 2010.
- Presentations and panels before:
 - Association of Public Safety Communications Officials International, Orlando, Florida, 2009.
 - National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors, Alexandria, VA, 2007.
 - ITS World Congress Chicago, Illinois 2002, Madrid, Spain, 2003, San Francisco, California, 2005, New York City, New York, 2008.
 - ITS America Annual Meetings Atlanta, Georgia 1993, Washington, DC, 1995, Houston, Texas, 1996, Washington, DC 1997, Detroit, MI, 1998, San Antonio, TX, 2004.
 - Federal Communications Commission
 - International Bar Association

Publications

- Co-author, "Defining a Stable, Protected and Secure Spectrum Environment for Autonomous Vehicles," 52 *Santa Clara Law Review* 1271, 2012.

- Co-author, "Spectrum Trading in the EU and the U.S. – Shifting Ends and Means," *International Comparative Legal Guide*, August 2011.
- Author, "Responding to the Needs of the Telecommunications Client," *Telecommunications Client Strategies*, Aspatore Press, 2008.
- Co-author, *The Spectrum Regulation Handbook*, Thompson Publishing Group, 1994.
- Co-author, articles in *Thinking Highways*:
 - "Regulating Autonomous Vehicles: Federal and State Conflict?" April 2016.
 - "The More Things Change... [10-year summary]," January 2016.
 - "Regulating ITS: Evolution or Disruption?" October 2015.
 - "Capitol Hill Seeks Answers on Connected Cars and Cybersecurity," July 2015.
 - "Cybersecurity and Connected Vehicles: Is the Risk Real," April 2015.
 - "Will the Public Trust Intelligent Transportation Systems?" January 2015.
 - "US Supreme Court Rules on Smartphones and Privacy," August 2014.
 - "In-Vehicle Navigation: NHTSA Seeks to Have a Say," June 2014.
 - "NHTSA Announces Its Decision to Pursue V2V Connected Vehicles, but what does this mean from a legal standpoint?" April 2014.
 - "Connected Vehicles: A Review of the Key, Early Legal Issues," January 2014.
 - "5.9 GHz Stakeholders Make their Case to the FCC," October 2013.
 - "NHTSA Tells States to Proceed with Caution in Permitting Self-Driving Vehicles," July 2013.
 - "DSRC Spectrum: Further Steps to Open the Band to Unlicensed Users," April 2013.
 - "NHTSA Proposes to Make Black Boxes Mandatory in 2014," January 2013.
 - "States Act to Authorize Autonomous Vehicles," November 2012.
 - "US Supreme Court Rules on GPS Tracking and Privacy," May 2012.
 - "Congress Targets DSRC Spectrum for Study," March 2012.
 - "Mobile Services, Location Data and Privacy in a Smartphone World," December 2011.
 - "The US's DSRC Spectrum is Under Threat," September 2011.
 - "GPS and the Fourth Amendment," April 2011.
 - "Critical Mass: Massachusetts Toll Discount Scheme Survives Constitutional Challenge – Again," December 2010.
 - "Bank Statement: President Obama's Call for a National Infrastructure Bank," September 2010.
 - "Congress Poised to Make Black Boxes Mandatory," June 2010.
 - "Take Your positions ... Global GPS," March 2010.
 - "ITS and Privacy: Under Scrutiny Again," September 2009.
 - "Input and Output: Does ITS Have a Role in Reducing Greenhouse Gases?" May 2009.
 - "If Not Now, When? How Much Nearer are we to Knowing Who is Going to Pay for All This ITS Stuff?" March 2009.
 - "Called to Account. Is it Time for a New Deal for Transportation? If so, can ITS lead the way?" October 2008.
 - "Hanging Tough? So just who is responsible if vehicle software causes an accident?" September 2008.

- "Fuel to the Fire ... or Not. Will high gas prices slow down ITS?" June 2008.
- "We're With the Band. 700 MHz: A Public/Private Partnership for Public Safety Communications?" February 2008.
- "License Plate Recognition Systems: Should Drivers be Concerned?" November 2007.
- "Manhattan on the Rocks. As Congestion Pricing Heads to New York, Are All the Legal Issues Being Considered?" September 2007.
- "We Know Where You Are Going ... Is Congestion Pricing a Risk to Privacy?" June 2007.
- "No Jam Today: Are we entering a new era for private involvement in transportation? March 2007.
- "Divide and Rule: The final Black Box rule has been released by NHTSA... and a can of worms has been opened," January 2007.
- Co-author, articles in *Traffic Technology International*:
 - "Program Notes. TTI's Legal Experts Study the Implications for VII Deployment," May 2006.
 - "Protecting Customer Information: New Obligations for ITS?" March 2006.
 - "Federal ITS Deployment Program Comes Under the Microscope," December 2005.
 - "TEA 21 Reauthorization: The Finish Line is Crossed," September 2005.
 - "Standards and ITS: The Process to Achieve Interoperability," June 2005.
 - "US Spectrum Management Policy Reform," February 2005.
 - "511 Comes Under Renewed Attacks," November 2004.
 - "DSRC: Licensing and Other Questions Remain Open," October 2004.
 - "Radiofrequency ID Devices: A Privacy Problem for ITS? August 2004.
 - "NHTSA Proposes Rules for Event Data Recorders," July 2004.
 - "Ten Years ... and Counting," April 2004.
 - "TEA 21 Reauthorization Proposals," March 2004.
 - "NHTSA Implements New Safety Data Reporting Requirements," August 2003.
 - "Navigating Privacy Across the Oceans," June 2003.
 - "Regulatory to Accumulate," May 2003.
 - "FCC Proposes Rules for Deployment of ITS Systems," May 2003.

About our firm

One of the world's strongest integrated law firms, providing insight at the point where law, business and government meet. We deliver commercially focused business solutions by combining our legal, lobbying and political capabilities and invaluable connections on the ground to a diverse mix of clients, from long-established leading corporations to emerging businesses, startup visionaries and sovereign nations. More than 1,500 lawyers in over 40 offices across four continents provide unrivaled access to expertise.