

Veteran Gibson Dunn Securities Partner and SEC Alum Named Next Director of Division of Corporation Finance

Posted in: SEC

Posted on: September 10, 2025

Moloney's brief expected to align closely with SEC chief's deregulatory orientation, with a focus on "alleviating disclosure burdens" and "tailoring smart, practical and effective regulations that will allow companies to thrive"

Following much anticipation, the SEC today announced that Gibson Dunn corporate and securities partner and former SEC staffer **James J. Moloney** — "a longtime and highly respected legal counsel to public companies worldwide on corporate transactions and corporate governance issues" — has been selected to serve as the next director of the agency's Division of Corporation Finance (CorpFin), effective next month. Moloney replaces CorpFin Acting Director Cicely LaMothe, who will return to her role as a deputy director.

According to the SEC's **announcement**, Moloney spent six years at the SEC prior to joining Gibson Dunn, where he has worked the past 25 years. At Gibson Dunn, he has served as a longstanding co-chair of the firm's securities regulation and corporate governance practice, and has advised a wide range of clients on corporate governance matters, disclosure rules, mergers and acquisitions, tender offers, proxy contests and going-private transactions, among other areas. His notable client representations include Third Point in its landmark proxy contest at Sotheby's, Emulex in staving off Broadcom's hostile bid, Kraft Foods in its acquisition of Cadbury, PeopleSoft in its sale to Oracle and Hewlett-Packard in its acquisition of Aruba Networks, among others.

Moloney is a past chair of the Proxy Statements and Business Combinations Subcommittee of the ABA Business Law Section's Federal Regulation of Securities Committee, and is listed in the 2026 edition of *The Best Lawyers in America* for his work in corporate governance law and securities regulation.

During his tenure at the SEC from 1994 to 2000, Moloney was an attorney-advisor and later a special counsel in CorpFin's Office of Mergers & Acquisitions, where he was the principal author of **Regulation M-A**, a comprehensive set of rules governing mergers and acquisitions, tender offers and proxy solicitations adopted by the agency in 1999.

Moloney has a B.S. in business administration with a major in accounting from Boston University, a J.D. from Pepperdine and an LL.M. in securities regulation from Georgetown. He is a member of the California bar, and is currently resident in Gibson Dunn's Orange County office.

In their statements marking Moloney's appointment, both SEC Chair Paul Atkins and Moloney himself offer an early glimpse into the direction Moloney may pursue as director, reinforcing that it is indeed a "new day" at the SEC. Atkins stated (emphasis added):

"Jim is a seasoned professional who understands all aspects of corporate governance and disclosure. He brings decades of experience to our regulatory efforts with an eye toward **supporting innovation and facilitating capital formation**. I am eager to get to work with him, Cicely and others in the Division of Corporation Finance to **modernize and improve our existing rules and alleviate disclosure burdens**."

Moloney stated (emphasis added):

"I am both excited and grateful for this opportunity to work with Chairman Atkins to **implement a clear regulatory framework for companies to disclose valuable information to investors**. I'm honored the Commissioners have placed their trust in me at such a critical time for our markets. There is much to be done, and I am looking forward to rejoining my colleagues in the Division of Corporation Finance in **tailoring smart, practical and effective regulations that will allow companies to thrive** and investors to benefit."

As CorpFin Director, Moloney will be charged with developing recommendations on many of the potential rule proposals featured on the SEC's recently published **rulemaking agenda** (previously discussed **here**), which prioritizes reducing compliance burdens and promoting capital formation and market efficiency. Among

the planned rulemaking items are “**rationalization of disclosure practices**” (expected to encompass facilitating principles- and materiality-based disclosures while eliminating duplicative, overly prescriptive and/or counterproductive rules), “**shareholder proposal modernization**,” “**shelf registration modernization**,” “**enhancement of emerging growth company accommodations and simplification of filer status for reporting companies**,” “**updating the exempt offering pathways**” and “**Rule 144 safe harbor**.”

We can anticipate hearing more from Moloney as he steps into his new role in October. His forthcoming policy statements and speeches are certain to provide valuable insight into his regulatory priorities and underlying philosophy.

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