

Sheppard Mullin

Seems like a lot of lawyers these days are eager to style themselves as doing energy, but Sheppard Mullin's DC managing partner Ed Schiff resists the temptation. Amazing, since he's working multiple alternative energy matters, while his California partners have plum client T. Boone Pickens. We dropped in on Ed to see if he gets any money out of those ads we see every five minutes on TV.



Ed says the folks in his 6-person DC department are corporate lawyers who just happen to be working transactions in the energy area—not a bad place to be while deals and M&As slow elsewhere. He's now working the acquisition of seven landfill sites across multiple states for FirmGreen, a company that turns methane to natural gas that can go through pipelines or even power cars. It's similar to work the California branch has done for client Pickens, who's been using some of his \$3 billion net worth pitching the "Pickens Plan" for more development of natural gas and wind power. Sheppard Mullin took his Clean Energy company public and in August

acquired a Dallas landfill project, adding capacity to an operation that already fuels bus fleets in California.



The firm got into alternative fuel transactions after passage of the '05 energy bill, when associate Jason Northcutt, left, helped private equity joint venture White Energy buy an ethanol plant in Bob Dole's Kansas hometown. But these guys don't spend all their time in the heartland. Luca Salvi brings a little Italian flair (note the in-office cappuccino machine). Maybe it was the caffeine talking, but they call the down times an opportunity for Sheppard Mullin to develop its own ranks (the firm picked up 12 lawyers from Heller) and practices like their energy work and representation of "opportunity funds" that invest in distressed assets. So far, they've formed and advised a \$100 million fund for corporate properties and a \$1 billion fund investing in hard real estate assets.