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I chose a degree in Environmental & Ecological Engineering as a means to obtain a career tackling complex environmental issues. I received a great technical education covering water and soil chemistry, ecology, core engineering principles, and resource management. As I learned about technical environmental issues and started working within the industry, I began to see the intimate connection between environmental engineering, regulation and compliance, and law and policy. I observed how the work in the engineering industry was regulation driven. My interests shifted from technical implementation and compliance to regulation and policy. Although I recognized how critical the engineering piece is to solving environmental issues, my passion for the issues and my skills aligned more with the regulatory side of the equation.

As such, when I finished my engineering degree, I went to law school to pursue my interest in the policy side of regulation. I chose the University of Colorado for its extensive environmental law program and the multiple experiential opportunities that came with it. I hoped to be able to take the technical knowledge I had built and use it to be an effective lawyer in the field. Engineering had also taught me the importance of cooperatively working with industry to achieve sound environmental stewardship rather than vilifying it. I wanted to take that core belief and integrate it into my lawyering as well.

Since starting law school almost two years ago, I have been able to start experiencing the work of an environmental lawyer. Last summer, I interned for the Department of Energy in Golden, CO to experience working for a federal agency and a regulatory body. After that, I spent a semester at the Occupational Safety & Health Review Commission working for a federal administrative law judge. The experience exposed me to the enforcement side of regulation and compliance. This summer I will be at an environmental non-profit and have the opportunity to work on influencing policy and regulation from the outside and next fall I will be in the Colorado Attorney General's Office in the Natural Resources & Environment sector to observe the regulatory process at the state level.

I am still undecided exactly where in the regulatory process I want to begin a career. However, I am confident that I want to do legal work related to environmental regulation and policy. Whether I am working making regulations, influencing regulation makers, setting broader policies, or challenging/supporting regulations through litigation, I will be exactly where I want to be. My goal has always been make an impact on environmental issues. As I develop my legal career in the environmental sector, I know I am pursuing that goal.