

Manufacturing Industry Team Activity Report

Members of Robinson+Cole's Manufacturing Industry Team continually engage and actively listen to our clients and contacts across the sector in the U.S. and globally. Following developments and trends is an integral component of our client service efforts.



Manufacturing Industry Team Chair [Jeff White](#) was appointed by the U.S. Secretary of Commerce to serve on the Connecticut District Export Council (DEC) during the 2020-2022 term. The International Trade Administration Commercial Service offices in the U.S.A. work closely with 61 DEC's that comprise nearly 1,500 business and trade experts from across the country who volunteer to help U.S. companies develop solid export strategies. Appointment to the DEC is based upon an individual's international trade leadership in the local community, ability to influence the local environment for exporting, knowledge of day-to-day international operations, interest in export development, and willingness and ability to devote time to Council activities.

Our team was pleased to join with the U.S. Department of Commerce in partnership with the Connecticut District Export Council for the [COVID-19 Special Topics Conference Calls Series Issues Affecting Manufacturers](#).

- March 18, 2020: ["Force Majeure Both for Contracts/Suppliers, Cancellation of Trade Shows,"](#) was co-presented by [Taylor Shea](#) and [Jeff White](#), as the first program in the "Coronavirus Special Topic Conference Calls Series." The session discussed some of the basics surrounding "force majeure" clauses and how companies can plan for and react to the current health emergency.
- March 26, 2020: ["Employment Issues Related to Teleworking"](#) was presented by [Matt Miklave](#), covering HR issues presented by the coronavirus and off-site working, along with federal, state and local policies.
- April 8, 2020: ["Price Gouging and Government Investigations"](#) was co-presented by [Ed Heath](#) and [Kendra Berardi](#), who were joined by [U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal](#) for a discussion about legal and practical considerations related to price gouging and government investigations into that conduct amid the current health crisis. They provided an overview of the current legal landscape, including how price gouging claims might be misused as an offensive tactic between competing businesses, and some of the best practices for businesses on the receiving end of a price gouging investigation.



[White](#) at the July [Summer Leadership](#)

Robinson+Cole was represented by [Melanie Dykas](#), [Jennifer Shanley](#) and [Jeff](#)

[Jeff White](#), [Taylor Shea](#) and [Gabrielle Mercadante](#) presented ["Force Majeure and Contract Considerations for Buyers and Sellers In Light of COVID-19"](#) in April to a virtual audience of the [Italy-America Chamber of Commerce Southeast \(IACC\)](#).

Conference of Women in Manufacturing@ (WiM). The program included discussions on solutions to common industry challenges, networking opportunities, and tangible next steps to improve workforce attraction, engagement, and retention. WiM is the only national trade association dedicated to providing year-round support to women who have chosen a career in the manufacturing industry.

The panel discussed the types of contracts that are likely to be impacted by COVID-19, the parties' rights and remedies in the event of non-performance caused by COVID-19, and the best business solutions to address any potential non-performance issues and/or claims.



CohnReznick hosted a webinar on June 9, 2020, titled "**COVID19: Challenges and Opportunities in the Manufacturing Supply Chain.**" **Jeff White**, participated on a panel that addressed specific areas, including: practical solutions for collaborating with suppliers for win/win relationships and minimizing legal disputes;

managing supply chain levers to synchronize supply and demand; improving forecasting and planning tools to stay ahead and stay profitable; and updating business models to nimbly respond to shifting consumer and supplier behavior.

Upcoming Program

[Join Us September 22, 2020](#)

Robinson+Cole's **Jeff White** will moderate the webinar, "Long-Term Financing for U.S.-Owned Operations in Mexico." This program, organized through the collaborative efforts of **CohnReznick**, Robinson+Cole, and **WorldBusiness Capital, Inc.**, will discuss an innovative debt-financing option for U.S.

companies planning to expand their operations, subsidiaries, and affiliates in Mexico. This loan program is especially geared for U.S. manufacturers that are planning to expand capacity at an existing facility in Mexico. U.S. companies entering the Mexican market through an acquisition or new venture may also qualify for financing. [REGISTER HERE](#)



Contributing to Thought Leadership

[EHS Today](#) published "[Outlook 2020: What EHS Managers in Manufacturing Need to Know](#)" authored by [Megan Baroni](#).

The piece offers a snapshot of what environmental, health, and safety issues are expected to confront manufacturers in 2020. The issues covered include per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), OSHA inspection weighting, and the EPA's focus on air and water. [View article.](#)

[CT Examiner "Refunds, Closure, Coronavirus and the Law for Business and Consumers in Connecticut"](#)

[Jeff White](#) and [Taylor Shea](#) were quoted extensively in the article, which used excerpts from the webinar on force majeure that Jeff and Taylor presented as part of a free "Coronavirus Special Topic Conference

Calls Series” offered by the U.S. Department of Commerce and the Connecticut District Export Council on March 18. [View article.](#)

[Industry Week published “Price-Gouging 101 for Suppliers” authored by Kendra Berardi and Edward Heath.](#)

The article shares proactive measures companies may want to consider when it comes to the pricing of products and services amid the COVID-19 pandemic, given the various federal and state emergency orders. “While the country grapples with this pandemic, any business considering making a price increase, or any business on the receiving end of a proposed price increase, will want to understand the laws that apply to price gouging and the practical options available to it.” [View article.](#)

[ISHN \(Industrial Safety & Hygiene News\) published “Virginia issues first COVID-19 OSHA Standard” authored by Megan Baroni and Jonathan Schaefer.](#)

The piece covers the Commonwealth of Virginia’s recent passing of the first COVID-19 OSHA standard, which “codifies, and in some cases exceeds, guidance from OSHA and the Center for Disease Control.” The article also acknowledges that “Virginia’s actions may be a signal to the many other ‘state-plan’ states to do the same.” [View article.](#)

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