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## Interior Department Assistant Secretary and Chief of Staff Thomas Strickland Joins WilmerHale

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WilmerHale is pleased to announce that [Thomas Strickland](#) has joined the firm as a partner in its Washington DC office. Mr. Strickland is the former Chief of Staff and Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks for the United States Department of the Interior. His distinguished service as a senior member of the Obama Administration followed his previous roles as chief legal officer for UnitedHealth Group, successful leader in private practice, United States Attorney for the District of Colorado, and Policy Director for Colorado Governor Richard Lamm. At WilmerHale, he will handle a range of matters at the intersection of law, business and government policy, including governmental enforcement cases, Congressional and internal investigations, corporate governance, and high-stakes crisis management matters.

Following confirmation by the US Senate, Mr. Strickland joined the Interior Department in 2009, holding both the Chief of Staff and Assistant Secretary positions. As Chief of Staff to Secretary Ken Salazar, he oversaw press, legislative and intergovernmental affairs for the department, including coordination with the White House and external constituencies. He was also responsible for oversight and management of 77,000 employees and a \$12 billion budget. As Assistant Secretary, Mr. Strickland was responsible for the oversight and management of the National Park System and the National Wildlife Refuge System, and for enforcement of the Endangered Species Act.

"Tom has a rare combination of public and private sector experience and substantive expertise that enables him to assist clients in successfully navigating the most challenging matters involving government oversight, regulation and enforcement," said WilmerHale Co-Managing Partner William Perlstein. "He has a strong reputation and track record as a problem solver in high-stakes cases."

Prior to joining the Department of the Interior, Mr. Strickland was executive vice president and chief legal officer at UnitedHealth Group, one of the nation's leading managed health care companies. At UnitedHealth, he managed an in-house team of 200 attorneys and a nationwide team of outside counsel. He was responsible for all legal, regulatory and compliance matters and implemented a number of corporate governance initiatives. Mr. Strickland also has extensive experience in private practice, including as a partner at Hogan & Hartson, where he helped build and lead the firm's practice in Colorado. Before that, Mr. Strickland served as US Attorney for Colorado, where he led the

federal investigation of the Columbine shootings. His substantive expertise includes natural resources and environmental law, health care regulation, and securities law.

“WilmerHale is the perfect fit for me because it has the full range of top policy, regulatory and litigation practices necessary to assist clients with high-stakes matters involving government oversight and policy,” said Mr. Strickland. “I had the privilege of working with a multi-disciplinary team at WilmerHale when I was with UnitedHealth, and was greatly impressed with the firm’s quality and depth, collaborative approach, and sophisticated understanding of how government works.”

Mr. Strickland earned his BA in English literature, with honors, from Louisiana State University in 1974 and received his JD, with honors, from the University of Texas School of Law in 1977. From 1977 to 1979, he was a law clerk for US District Court Judge Cal O. Bue, Jr. in the Southern District of Texas.