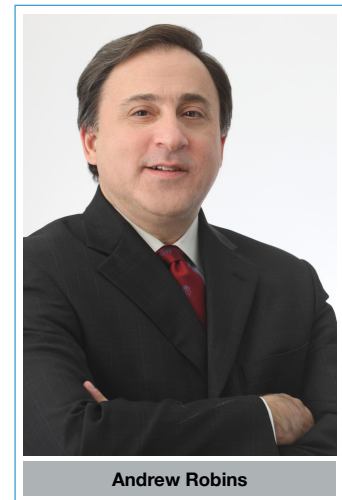


## { Q&A with Sills Cummis' Andrew Robins }

**Andrew B. Robins**, of counsel with **Sills Cummis & Gross P.C.**, focuses on environmental law, counseling clients in regulatory compliance, cost recovery litigation, redevelopment, brownfields, transaction negotiation and risk analysis.



**Q: What aspects of your practice area are in need of reform and why?**

A: Resolution of liability amongst jointly liable tortfeasors remains an inefficient and overly complex process. The current processes often entail costs in excess of the actual liability. The inefficiency disservices our clients as much as protection of the environment.

**Q: What is an important issue or case relevant to your practice area and why?**

A: Over the past decades, our system of environmental laws and regulations has become overly dependent on regulatory fiat and a “command-and-control” philosophy dedicated to addressing “worst-case scenarios” that are often theoretical at best. The current approach wastes money, discourages innovation and provides a disproportionately small actual impact on protecting our environment and the efficient use of our resources.

New programs that leverage private investment of capital and brain power can reverse that trend. The new licensed site remediation professional program in New Jersey (and the Massachusetts program that was used as its model) allow for the skills, knowledge and experience of dedicated professionals to be maximized to protect our environment with far greater efficiency in cost and in time. If there is any hope of combining environmental policy with sound economics, such programs must be fostered and expanded to cover the full range of environmental issues.

**Q: Outside your own firm, name an attorney in your field who has impressed you and explain why.**

A: Leo Yanoff, for whom I clerked while he was sitting as a trial court judge. Every day, he reveled in making his courtroom into a model of efficiency and decorum without compromising its fundamental function as a place of justice. He had a tremendous intellect, photographic memory and thirst for new knowledge, which made my clerkship both challenging and fascinating.

I watched as he consistently moved more cases to resolution than his fellow jurists, settling more cases and trying more cases but always remaining focused on giving each litigant their full right to pursue their case. He

was fluent in many languages and versed in many areas of law but always was able to explain the most complex law to jurors with ease or focus parties to effectuate a settlement. He taught by example what true dedication to one's profession can accomplish.

**Q: What is a mistake you made early in your career and what did you learn from it?**

A: As an associate, I often focused on minutia alone without relating how those details impacted our client's needs and goals. I often had a lot of information to relay, but I was not providing that information in a way that would also provide counsel and advice to our clients. I felt I had to justify my efforts (and time billed) with the volume of my work product.

I learned to synthesize and summarize the salient points first and then provide the detailed backup afterwards. I have found that what most clients want is value added, not volume produced. I have learned that clients appreciate when their counsel allow the client to control how the client's time is used. I always focus on identifying the "bottom line" first and the detail after.