

Felisa E. Sanchez

Partner

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OVERVIEW

Felisa Sanchez is a partner in the firm's Energy Assets and Transactions practice group. She has a broad practice in maritime transactions, energy, and finance.

Felisa has represented both domestic and international clients in maritime financings, leasing and restructurings involving maritime assets such as drillships and drilling rigs, tugs, barges, cargo vessels, supply vessels, cruise ships, yachts and related collateral. She has also represented clients in a variety of maritime industry and fisheries transactions, joint ventures, acquisitions, operational contracts, charters, shipping contracts, fuel supply agreements, port development agreements and leasing, involving vessels, ports, and maritime assets.

In addition to assisting clients with financing matters, Felisa has also advised clients in investments and acquisitions involving maritime assets. This includes private equity investments in maritime portfolio companies, acquisitions and divestitures and the purchase of maritime assets out of bankruptcy and restructuring settings. She represents both investors and owners in companies owning Jones Act vessels as well as fishing vessels with a focus on compliance with coastwise trade laws and the American Fisheries Act. Over the years, she has also assisted clients with vessel purchase and sales under various flags, including the United States, Marshall Islands, Liberia, Bahamas, Panama, and Vanuatu, among others. Felisa is also experienced with maritime issues, port matters and charterparties for offshore wind and offshore oil and gas projects.

Felisa's general finance practice includes domestic and international debt financings secured by a variety of assets. She is experienced in representing both borrowers and lenders in commercial loans in industries including energy and energy services, food and beverage, auto dealership financing and other specialized financial services industries. She has also advised clients in the restructuring of debt and collateral lien reviews involving traditional, energy and maritime assets. Felisa also is experienced with equipment leasing matters.

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

Felisa has over 20 years of experience serving clients in the financial services, maritime, transportation, and energy industries. Prior to joining the firm, Felisa was of counsel for a global firm, representing public and private companies in complex transactions.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Houston's Top Lawyers, Energy & Natural Resources, *H Texas Magazine*, 2011
- Houston Top Professional on the Fast Track, Energy & Natural Resources, *H Texas Magazine*, 2006, 2007

PROFESSIONAL / CIVIC ACTIVITIES

- Women International Shipping & Trading Association
  - Co-President, Texas Chapter (Current)
- Houston Bar Association
  - International Law Section
    - Executive Council Member
    - Chair (2008 - 2009)
    - Former Vice Chair (2007 - 2008), Secretary/Treasurer (2006 - 2007)

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

- "The Jones Act: What Maritime Operators Need to Know," WIMOs Webinar, October 2026
- Speaker and panelist, “Handling Commercial Loans: From Loan Structures to Documentation and Closing,” Massachusetts Continuing Legal Education, Inc., 4 June 2026
- Moderator, “Navigating the Digital Seas: Cybersecurity and AI in Maritime,” WISTA USA Annual General Meeting and Conference, 8 May 2026
- Speaker, “Salty, Silent, but not Surreptitious: Update on Maritime Liens,” UT Law CLE Admiralty and Maritime Law Conference, 10 January 2025
- Moderator, “Offshore Wind Conversation,” among in-house counsel for the Port of New Bedford, Port of Albany and South Jersey Port Corporation, American Association of Port Authorities' (AAPA) Port Administration Management Conference, 12 June 2024
- Panelist, “Offshore Wind's Role in the Decarbonization of the Global Power Industry,” K&L Gates LLP, Wood Mackenzie and Japan Institute for Overseas Investment's Route to Zero Emission: Opportunities in the Evolving Power Markets Seminar, 11 September 2023
- Speaker, “Handling Commercial Loans: From Loan Structures to Documentation and Closing,” Massachusetts Continuing Legal Education, Inc., 1 June 2023

- Panelist, “The Role of Ports in Supporting Offshore Wind Development,” K&L Gates' The Blue Economy, 16 November 2022
- Moderator, “Options to Finance or Fund Port Economic Development,” K&L Gates' The Blue Economy, 16 November 2022
- Panelist, "OSW Permitting and Approvals,” Northwest Environmental Business Council's Oregon's Energy Future Offshore Wind Symposium, 8 September 2022
- Speaker, “Handling Commercial Loans: From Loan Structures to Documentation and Closing,” Massachusetts Continuing Legal Education, Inc., 23 June 2022
- Webinar speaker, “U.S. Jones Act and Its Implications for Canadian Companies in the Offshore Wind Supply Chain,” Marine Renewables Canada and the Consulate General of Canada, Boston, 24 June 2021
- Speaker and panelist, “Handling Commercial Loans: From Loan Structures to Documentation and Closing,” Massachusetts Continuing Legal Education, Inc., 26 May 2021
- Speaker, “Navigating Unprecedented Times: The Impact of the Coronavirus and Historically-Low Oil Prices,” Association of Corporate Counsel, Houston, 5 May 2020

EDUCATION

- J.D., The University of Texas School of Law, 2002
- B.A., Rice University, 1998

ADMISSIONS

- Bar of Texas

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP *POWERED BY HUB*

- November 2025, Recent Developments in Sanctions and USTR Section 301 Fees Affecting the Shipping Industry
- 9 October 2025, The Essential Guide to the Jones Act
- 5 September 2023, BOEM Offshore Wind Lease Update: Gulf of Mexico Auction Produces Lackluster Results, Not Likely Repeated in Future Oregon and Mid-Atlantic Lease Areas Auctions

- 16 December 2022 , Congress Enacts Major Expansion of Capital Construction Fund, Creating New Opportunities for Marine Financing of Jones Act Vessels
- November 2022, The Blue Economy: The Role of Ports in Developing Sustainable Marine Industries

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

- "Offshore Wind Auction Results Portend Difficulties In Gulf," *Law360*, 12 September 2023

NEWS & EVENTS

- 6 January 2025, K&L Gates Names Nearly 35 New Partners, Of Counsel, and Policy Professionals Across Firm
- 12 June 2024, 2024 Port Administration Management Conference - Offshore Wind Conversation, Hosted by American Association of Port Authorities
- 25 April 2022, K&L Gates Adds Maritime Lawyer in Houston

OTHER MEDIA MENTIONS

- Quoted, "Trump's executive orders cause hesitation, confusion for clean energy developers," *Utility Dive*, 30 January 2025
- Quoted, "2025 Renewable Energy Outlook: Full speed ahead as second Trump administration begins," *Utility Dive*, 21 January 2025
- Quoted, "9 US electric power sector issues to watch in 2025," *Utility Dive*, 8 January 2025
- Quoted, "Top 5 Energy Policy Areas To Watch In 2025," *Law360*, 1 January 2025
- Quoted, "How will offshore wind fare under a second Trump term?" *Canary Media*, 13 November 2024
- Quoted, "The uncertain future of offshore wind: After a late and bumpy start, the U.S. is finally gearing up to build its own robust offshore wind sector," *Institutional Investing in Infrastructure,* 1 July 2024
- Quoted, "States, feds must do more to mitigate offshore wind risks: Cleanpower 2024 panel," *Utility Dive*, 16 May 2024
- Quoted, "Shop Talk: A Conversation with Felisa Sanchez," *Institutional Investing in Infrastructure*, 1 May 2024
- Quoted, "Renewable Energy Outlook: Addressing supply chain, project hurdles could see dividends in 2024," *Utility Dive*, 18 January 2024
- Quoted, "New York's new offshore wind solicitation shows state procurements are improving: attorneys," *Utility Dive*, 4 December 2023

AREAS OF FOCUS

- Energy Assets and Transactions
- Energy Finance
- Fisheries and Aquaculture
- Maritime Compliance
- Maritime Regulatory
- Maritime Transactions and Finance

INDUSTRIES

- Energy
- Maritime
- Offshore Wind Energy
- Oil and Gas
- Power
- Renewables
- Transportation and Logistics
- Transportation Finance
- Transportation Infrastructure

REPRESENTATIVE EXPERIENCE

Maritime Transactions

- Represent owner of US-flag fishing fleet in the refinancing of its term loan credit facility.
- Represent shipping company in connection with acquisition and acquisition financing of general cargo vessel.
- Represent international joint venture company in connection with the transfers of LPG carriers in connection with unwinding of a joint venture.
- Represent LNG terminal owner in connection with tug services agreement negotiations and review of tug financing arrangements.
- Represent US vessel owner in connection with acquisition and registration of freight barge.

- Represent marine services company in connection with the sale and leaseback transaction of four new-build crew transfer vessels.
- Represent US joint venture in connection with modifications to its Maritime Administration Title XI Loan Guarantee financing documents.
- Assisted US-based manufacturer in negotiating a contract of affreightment and HEAVYLIFTVOY charters in connection with shipment of structural steel.
- Represented US-flag vessel owner in connection with maritime-related diligence and bid proposal for a proposed acquisition.
- Represent US-flag vessel owner in connection with the redemption of multiple Title XI Loan Guarantee bonds.
- Represented US-based vessel owner in negotiation of joint venture to construct offshore wind supply vessels.
- Represented cruise line in providing acquisition financing to excursion company secured by borrower's US-flag vessels.
- Assisted auto parts manufacturer in the sale of its Marshall Islands-flag dry bulk carrier vessel, also in the negotiation and documentation of two in-transit financing facilities.
- Represented US company in the purchase of a Marshall Islands-flag vessel for use in transporting its cargo.
- Represented offshore wind developer in connection with investment and finance matters related to US shoreside manufacturing facility.
- Provided guidance to client on requirements for US-flag vessels operating in offshore wind construction projects and respond to ancillary documentation requests related to vessel financing, chartering, and contracting issues.
- Represented client in preparation of form master agreement for utilization in connection with the shipment of wind turbine blades, WTGs, and nacelles.
- Represent high-net-worth individual in sale of yacht and purchase of yacht from dealer.
- Represent seller of a 70 m luxury motor super yacht in negotiation of sales contract and sale of yacht.
- Represent purchaser of a luxury yacht in connection with acquisition of yacht to be registered in Malta.
- Represented US-flag vessel owner in connection with maritime-related diligence and bid proposal for a proposed acquisition.
- Represented purchaser of four high-end recreational vessels for registration in Qatar.
- Represent marine fuel provider in connection with review of applicable laws and requirements for LNG bunkering operations.
- Represent lender in connection with the financing of four LNG support tugboats.

- Represent bondholders as Marshall Islands and special maritime counsel in connection with the bond financing of a Marshall Islands-flag drillship.
- Represented a US banking company in sales-leaseback transactions for a small fleet of coastwise-qualified tugboats.
- Represented US banking company in connection with a bilateral loan secured by Jones Act barges.
- Represented European upstream company in connection with the acquisition of a non-operating ownership interest in an offshore lease in the Gulf of Mexico.
- Represented international syndicate of banks as special maritime counsel in note financing secured by a Marshall Islands-flag drillship.
- Represented international lender syndicate as special maritime and Marshall Islands counsel in arrest of drillship, management arrangements, and auction of drillship.
- Assisted international drybulk carrier in connection with its Chapter 11 restructuring and related maritime issues.
- Counseled US tug company on tariff agreements, customer contracts, shipbuilding contracts, and financing matters.

Regulatory Compliance

- Advise US fishing, harvesting, and processing company as maritime counsel in the refinancing of its credit facilities and collateral matters related to US-flag fishing vessels in accordance with the American Fisheries Act.
- Coordinated with engineering and operations teams for an offshore international construction contractor to develop Jones Act-compliant construction and installation plans for projects in the US Gulf of Mexico.
- Provided compliance advice to international marine contractor on issues related to transportation of completed spars in the Gulf of Mexico and prepared CBP rulings requests to support position.
- Reviewed proposed changes to Jones Act interpretative rulings and advised clients on compliance with Jones Act in offshore oil and gas operations.
- Advised client on compliance with coastwise trade regulations.
- Advised various foreign-flag vessel owners on compliance with Jones Act and Passenger Vessel Services Act in connection with movement of goods and personnel.
- Advised investors on US citizenship requirements and ownership structures in connection with US-flag Jones Act vessels.
- Advised investors on citizenship requirements and Jones Act warrants issued in connection with bankruptcy restructuring plans of coastwise vessel owners.

Energy and Energy Finance Transactions

- Represent drilling company in reviewing legal requirements for potential US Gulf of Mexico operations.
- Represented oilfield water infrastructure company in the negotiation of a US$50 million sustainability-linked term loan.
- Represented ad hoc group of secured noteholders in a collateral lien review of oil and gas assets securing a reserve-based lending facility and ensuing Chapter 11 bankruptcy and lien challenge actions.
- Represented group of secured noteholders as oil and gas financing counsel in connection with the RBL Chapter 11 exit financing of a Texas-based E&P company.
- Represented senior lenders as oil and gas finance counsel in connection with financing the acquisition of oil and gas properties located in the Comanche oil field.
- Represented E&P company in its first and second-lien secured credit facilities collateralized with certain oil and gas properties located in the State of West Virginia.
- Represented Texas upstream oil and gas company in connection with its US$500 million revolving credit facility secured by oil and gas properties in the Midland Basin.
- Represented agent in a term loan facility to a mid-size E&P company secured by Texas oil and gas interests.
- Represented start-up E&P company in connection with an acquisition and working capital financing secured by Texas oil and gas assets.
- Represented portfolio company in its negotiation and execution of a US$500 million revolving credit facility with a US bank secured by multistate oil and gas interests.
- Assist offshore wind developer with negotiation of development agreement and lease for US offshore wind marshalling facility.
- Advise provider of electronic substations and cable in connection with early-stage analysis of US general maritime law, Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, indemnity provisions, choice of law provisions, and general contracting issues with respect to offshore wind projects.
- Advised client in negotiation of an EPC contract for an FPSO for use in Mexico.

General Finance

- Represent auto dealer finance lender in multiple revolving loan and floor plan loan credit facilities.
- Represented auto dealer finance lender in a complex Chapter 11 restructuring plan.
- Represented leading provider of fresh-cut produce in multiple syndicated loan facilities in excess of US$100 million, bridge loan facilities, and a debt restructuring, including a 363 sale of assets.
- Represented fresh-cut produce provider as finance counsel in its Chapter 11 bankruptcy filing, DIP financing, and Section 363 sale process.
- Represented mezzanine lender in documentation and lien review of mezzanine and RBL credit facilities in connection with pending acquisition.