

CASE STUDIES

Baker Donelson Attorney Represents Historic New Jersey Lighthouse in Appeal of \$4.4 Million FEMA Clawback

Pro Bono

Baker Donelson Of Counsel Erin J. Greten provided pro bono services to the volunteer stewards of New Jersey's Romer Shoal Lighthouse to appeal a decision by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to claw back \$4.4 million in disaster relief assistance ten years after the disaster.

The historic Romer Shoal Lighthouse has provided lifesaving communications to mariners in New York Harbor since 1898, but it sustained catastrophic damage during Hurricane Sandy. When the restoration project faced construction delays due to COVID-19, the stewards submitted a time extension request to FEMA. Instead of granting the extension, and without first discussing concerns with the stewards, FEMA decided that the documentation on hand was insufficient to determine that the stewards were eligible for the grant. The agency issued a decision that the project was ineligible for assistance and reversed all funding.

Upon learning that they stood to lose the funding that was critical for the repair and restoration of the lighthouse, the stewards reached out to Baker Donelson for help. Erin leveraged her deep knowledge and experience with FEMA's Public Assistance program to develop the strategy and write two crucial FEMA appeals challenging the ineligibility determination, and providing the documentation and information needed to prove the stewards' eligibility under the law.

Romer Shoal Lighthouse President Keith Kilgannon shared that, "Without Erin Greten and the Baker Donelson team fighting for us, we did not stand a chance. Erin's strategic guidance was sought and valued by all of our stakeholders. Her determination and focus on key issues kept our efforts on track and gave us every possible opportunity for success. Our small team of volunteers is incredibly grateful for Baker Donelson's pro bono efforts to save this historic landmark."

Results may vary depending on your particular facts and legal circumstances.