

# The New ASTM Phase II Environmental Site Assessment Standard: A Flexible and Adaptable Due Diligence Tool

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Christopher P. McCormack

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Pullman & Comley Environmental attorney Christopher P. McCormack chaired the the ASTM Task Group responsible for revisions to the ASTM standard E1903 for Phase II Environmental Site Assessments. In the July 2011 issue of the newsletter published by the Environmental Transactions and Brownfields Committee of the American Bar Association's Section of Environment, Energy and Resources, he writes about the revision process, the issues the task group addressed, and the major features of the revised standard.

Chris explains, "The revision process revealed that people who use Phase II assessments need very different things. Lenders complained that 'Phase II' reports could be confusing because they were inconsistent in scope and objective. Transactional users, on the other hand, needed flexibility to scope assessment work to meet their particular needs. Among other things, the revised standard synthesizes these viewpoints by recognizing that users need to be able to perform assessments tailored to their objectives, but requiring that the objectives be stated clearly so everyone understands what any given Phase II is trying to accomplish."

In the article, "Counterpoint on the New ASTM Phase II Environmental Site Assessment Standard: A Flexible and Adaptable Due Diligence Tool," he says that the challenge of the revision was to "define a 'standard' approach to performing activities that are nonstandard in objectives and scope. The solution reflective of better practice...is to start with the purpose and means of the assessment. With objectives defined, the conceptual model and the scientific method provide intellectual discipline and methodological coherence for assessment activities."

To read the full article on the ABA website, please click [here](#).

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