



## AREAS OF PRACTICE

Legislative and Government Affairs  
Homeland Security

## INDUSTRIES

Transportation and Transportation  
Infrastructure  
Maritime

## GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE

Director, Americorps VISTA  
  
Associate Deputy Attorney General,  
United States Department of Justice,  
Office of the Attorney General  
  
Secretary of Transportation, United  
States Department of Transportation  
  
Vice Chairman of the Board of  
Commissioners, Virginia Port Authority

## BAR ADMISSIONS

District of Columbia

## EDUCATION

J.D., Harvard Law School, 1973  
  
B.A., *magna cum laude*, Yale University,  
1970

## James H. Burnley IV

Washington, DC

Partner

T 202.344.4054

F 202.344.8300

[profile](#) [news](#) [publications](#) [events/speaking engagements](#)

Jim Burnley focuses his practice on government relations and regulatory and legislative affairs, with a concentration in transportation matters.

Mr. Burnley served as the U.S. Secretary of Transportation from 1987 to 1989 and is one of the nation's foremost authorities on transportation law and policy. He also served as Deputy Secretary of Transportation from 1983 to 1987 and was General Counsel of the Department in 1983. Prior to his years with the USDOT, Mr. Burnley served as Associate Deputy Attorney General for the Justice Department and as Director of the VISTA Program in the early 1980s.

### SIGNIFICANT MATTERS

Mr. Burnley represents a wide array of transportation clients. Public policy issues in which he is engaged include the continuing debate over public-private partnerships; climate change, including cap and trade proposals; the licensing of a privately financed multibillion dollar offshore LNG port; and the impact of the extreme volatility in petroleum prices on the airline and trucking industries.

With respect to efforts to attract private equity to U.S. transportation infrastructure, he advises clients on how to protect their legitimate interests while seeking transactions that are politically realistic. He also has extensive experience in more traditional publicly financed projects. For example, he co-chaired the coalition that successfully lobbied for the more than two billion dollars required to replace the Wilson Bridge, which is a part of the Washington, D.C. Beltway.

As outside legislative counsel to American Airlines, Mr. Burnley played a key role in the crafting and passage of the emergency Airline Transportation Stabilization Act passed in the days after September 11, 2001 to help save the disaster-challenged US airline industry. Among the provisions upon which he focused, the Act limited the liability of American and United Airlines and their agents at their multi-billion dollar insurance limits; and it created a federal fund to compensate the victims and their families. He also worked on the provision providing for back-up federal terrorism insurance, without which most major air carriers would have faced grounding for the second time very soon after the attacks. *Congressional Quarterly* characterized enactment of this package as being "generally regarded as an unrivaled lobbying coup."

He has also represented a variety of clients on airport-related issues, such as nearby commercial projects that must be reviewed by the FAA to assure compatibility with airport operations. He has represented airport operators on federal issues and airport vendors concerned about applicable federal regulations.


Mr. Burnley was one of the leaders of a coalition of transportation and manufacturing interests, which won a Congressional override of the Ergonomics Rule issued in the Clinton administration's final days.

### ACTIVITIES

Mr. Burnley maintains a visible presence in transportation. He served for five years as Vice Chairman of the Board of Commissioners of the Virginia Port Authority. He was Chairman of the Port Study Panel of the National Chamber of Commerce Foundation. He is also a member of the Business Advisory Committee of the Transportation Center at Northwestern University.

Mr. Burnley is active in national Republican circles. For example, he was the Senior Domestic Policy Advisor to Elizabeth Dole's presidential campaign. He was also a Senior Advisor to Bob Dole during the 1996 presidential race, and he served on the transportation transition team for the Bush administration. Most recently, he advised Senator McCain's Presidential campaign on transportation issues.

Mr. Burnley maintains active civic and corporate board affiliations, including several tied to his transportation work. He served on the Board of Directors of Infrasoftware, Inc.,



which produces software for the engineering industry, and of MTA Safety Training Systems, a company involved in truck driver training, until the sales of the companies. He is a Trustee and former Chairman of the Jamestown Foundation and also a past Chairman of the Intercollegiate Studies Institute. He also served as Chairman of the Roe Institute Advisory Committee of the Heritage Foundation, and is a member of the Board of Directors of Freedom Works.