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Parsons Behle Adds 2 Ex-Rio Tinto Attys To Enviro Practice

By **Lance Duroni**

Law360, Chicago (March 25, 2014, 2:21 PM ET) -- Parsons Behle & Latimer recently added three attorneys to bolster its environmental, energy and natural resources practice, including two top in-house lawyers at mining giant Rio Tinto PLC who previously worked at the firm.

R. Craig Johnson is returning to the firm as a shareholder after a stint as Rio Tinto's general counsel in the U.S. and South America, while Lynn Cardey-Yates returns from her position as vice president of sustainable development for Rio Tinto Kennecott, according to a March 6 statement from Parsons Behle.

The third new addition, Jeffrey Corey, is a former federal public defender in Alexandria, Va., who will focus on white collar defense work in addition to environmental matters. All three attorneys are posted at the firm's Salt Lake City office.

"This expansion comes at a time when our clients are experiencing a rapidly evolving regulatory and economic environment. Adding Craig, Lynn and Jeff to our team greatly enhances our ability address new regulatory, corporate and enforcement issues," said Richard J. Angell, chairman of Parsons Behle's environmental group.

Johnson had previously worked at the firm from 1994 to 2007, with his practice focusing on natural resources projects in North America and Latin America. In addition to Rio Tinto, his time as a corporate lawyer also included a stint with Resolution Copper Co.

Johnson told Law360 on Tuesday that he was excited to come back and handle mergers and acquisitions and investments for his old firm, though he enjoyed his six years at Rio Tinto. He said the move would give him the chance to do a lot more mining work in Latin America — something he believes Parsons Behle excels at.

"I simply thought it was time — at 64-years-old — to return to private practice and help build the firm, and mentor younger lawyers to be more attuned to the M&A world today," he said.

Cardey-Yates — who was a partner and board member at Parsons Behle before departing in 1993 — spearheaded Rio Tinto Kennecott's health, safety, permitting and environmental teams, overseeing energy programs and managing all of the company's water and land resources.

She has also served as a board member of the Nature Conservancy of Utah, and is currently a trustee-at-large for the Rocky Mountain Mineral Law Foundation.

Prior to working as a public defender, Corey was an environmental defense attorney in Washington, D.C., where he litigated cases involving major federal environmental statutes, including the Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act and CERCLA, according to the firm.

Founded in 1882, Parsons Behle boasts 127 attorneys at offices in Boise, Las Vegas, Reno, Salt Lake City, Spokane and Washington, D.C.

--Editing by John Quinn.

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