

ALBERT I. HERSON

SENIOR OF COUNSEL

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LANGUAGES:
English



A recognized authority on CEQA, NEPA, and natural resources law with more than 40 years experience, Al Herson is counsel to government and private entities on complex environmental and land use legal matters.

As an environmental attorney and planner, Al has helped prepare and review hundreds of CEQA and NEPA documents for large, public-facing infrastructure and development projects. These include EIRs and EISs for water resources projects, Regional Transportation Plans, General Plans, Climate Action Plans, and large-scale land use and transportation projects. Al provides in-depth guidance and reviews on priority topics such as land use, climate change, transportation, and air quality impact analysis. On many projects, he also reviews regional and local plans for compliance with Government Code requirements, and for compliance with state guidance such as the RTP Guidelines and the General Plan Guidelines.

Al helps shape the landscape of land use and environmental law. He served for 15 years as co-chair for CLE International's Annual CEQA Update conference, recognized as the state's leading CEQA legal conference. He also served on the Executive Committees of the State Bar and Sacramento County Environmental Law Sections, is a Fellow of the American Institute of Certified Planners (FAICP), and is a Past President of both the American Planning Association California Chapter and the California Planning Roundtable.

In addition to his extensive project experience and professional involvement with legal and planning associations, Al maintains ongoing publishing and teaching roles, which require him to stay informed on the latest judicial, legislative, and regulatory developments in planning and environmental law—knowledge he regularly shares with clients. For example, he co-authored the LexisNexis CEQA Practice Guide and its annual updates, sharing the latest developments in CEQA legal requirements and practice.

EDUCATION

University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law, JD, *summa cum laude*, 1984

University of California at Los Angeles, MA, 1976

University of Illinois, BA, *summa cum laude*, 1972

ADMISSIONS

California, 1984 – Bar No. 114507

U.S. District Court, Eastern District of California

PRACTICE AREAS

Land Use & Environmental

CEQA/NEPA

Climate Change & Sustainability

Energy, Utilities & Renewables

Land Entitlements

HONORS & AWARDS

- Award of Honor – *Planner Emeritus Network, American Planning Association, California Chapter*
- Distinguished Leadership Award, *American Planning Association, California Chapter*
- Outstanding Instructor Award, *UC Davis Extension*
- Outstanding Instructor Award, *UCLA Extension*

PROFESSIONAL & COMMUNITY AFFILIATIONS

- Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation, Planning Guidelines Update Advisory Group (2026-2027)
- The State Bar of California, Member (1984–Present)
- CLE International, Annual CEQA Conference, Co-Chair (2004–2019)
- Sacramento County Bar Association, Environmental Law Section, Executive Committee (2018)
- American Institute of Certified Planners, Fellow
- Association of Environmental Professionals (AEP)
- California Water Plan Update Advisory Committees (2009, 2013)
- California Department of Water Resources Climate Change Technical Advisory Group (2012)
- California Planning Roundtable, President (2007–2008)
- The State Bar of California Environmental Law Section, Executive Committee (1994–1997)
- American Planning Association (APA), California Chapter, President (1989–1991)

PRESENTATIONS & PUBLICATIONS

- Co-Author, *California Environmental Law and Policy: A Practical Guide* – Solano Press (2017, 2026 update in process)
- Co-Author, *California Environmental Quality Act Compliance, A Practical Guidance® Practice Note* – LexisNexis (2018 – 2026)
- Panelist, Advanced CEQA Workshops (various advanced CEQA topics), Association of Environmental Professionals (2010–2021)

- Co-Author, *California Environmental Law and Land Use Practice Treatise CEQA chapters*, Chapters 20–24 (2020–2021)
- Author, *Proposed 2018 Comprehensive CEQA Guidelines Amendments*, California Environmental Law Reporter (February 2018)
- Instructor, *Caltrans In-House Land Use Planning Course*, UC Davis Extension (2017)
- Instructor, *Land Use and Environmental Law* (Four-Day Course), UC Davis Extension (2011–2017)
- Instructor, *State Water Resources Control Board In-House CEQA Course*, UC Davis Extension (2015)
- Co-Author, *The NEPA Book* (2001)
- Co-Author, *CEQA Deskbook* (1999)
- Instructor, Numerous CEQA and NEPA workshops, UC Davis Extension
- Instructor, Numerous CEQA and NEPA workshops, UCLA Extension
- Author of numerous articles and case reviews in California Environmental Law Reporter

REPRESENTATIVE EXPERIENCE

- **Santa Clara Valley Water District – Outside CEQA Counsel.** Represented Santa Clara Valley Water District (Valley Water) as outside CEQA counsel since 2010 on over 40 water supply, flood management, or natural resources management projects. Provided strategic guidance and document review for complex EIRs prepared for projects such as the Anderson Dam Seismic Retrofit Project, the Fish and Habitat Collaborative Effort (FAHCE), the Coyote Creek Flood Protection Project, the Pacheco Reservoir Expansion Project, and the Stream Maintenance Program. Also provided strategic guidance and document review for joint EIRs/EISs prepared for the San Luis Reservoir Low Point Project and the South SF Bay Shoreline Project.
- **San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) – Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy.** Collaborated closely with staff, leadership, and consultants to provide complex advice on the 2011, 2015, 2021, and 2025 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategies (RTP/SCSs) and their EIRs. Drafted key EIR deliverables (memoranda on technical methodologies, significance criteria, and mitigation measures), prepared detailed analyses of compliance with transportation planning and environmental laws, and helped successfully litigate high-profile challenges to the 2050 RTP/SCS EIR (*Cleveland National Forest Foundation, et al. v. SANDAG* (2017) 3 Cal.5th 497; *Cleveland National Forest Foundation, et al. v. SANDAG* (2017) 17 Cal.App.5th 413.)
- **County of Los Angeles – 2045 Climate Action Plan and EIR.** Played key role in providing strategic advice and reviewing both the 2045 Climate Action Plan (CAP) and its EIR. The 2045 CAP sets ambitious greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction targets through

2045 aligned with state legislative targets; identifies GHG reduction measures from major sectors to achieve those targets; and includes a development review consistency checklist for CEQA streamlining. CEQA compliance reviews included reviewing the 2045 CAP for compliance with CEQA Guidelines requirements for “qualified” greenhouse gas reduction plans intended to streamline project-level CEQA GHG analyses.

- **City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles World Airports – LAX Landside Access**

Modernization Program EIR. As part of a long-standing role, serve as special CEQA counsel for the \$5.5 billion LAX Landside Access Modernization Program, focusing on planning documents and the EIR, particularly alternative access modes. The project includes an Automated People Mover connecting to Metro’s 96th Street Connector, Green Line extension, Intermodal Transportation Facilities, and a new Consolidated Rental Car facility.