

# CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Meyers Nave's Crisis Management team helps clients assess legal and reputational crises anticipate and plan for potential risks, control crises by prioritizing what should be done, and develop effective response strategies and action plans, including internal and external communications programs

We have specialty expertise with high-profile issues that attract intense media attention and public scrutiny.

Our team handles crisis situations that begin as litigation as well as those that become litigious as the crisis unfolds or after it concludes. Our crisis litigation experience includes multi-party and multi-district cases, civil litigations that are intertwined with pending criminal actions, and landmark cases dealing with matters of first impression. Our team has a successful track record of trial and appellate work in state and federal courts, as well as administrative hearings and other proceedings before regulatory and investigatory agencies.

Meyers Nave provides clients with a strategic combination of substantive legal skills, attention to reputational concerns, and urgent advice on liability management and litigation implications of many types of crises, including public health and safety emergencies, environmental catastrophes, government enforcement actions, workplace and other internal investigations, class actions, and emerging controversies that arise at the intersection of law and highly charged issues for society.

When a crisis arises from within a client's organization and impacts the public's trust in a client, its products or its services, our mission is to help clients preserve or regain that public trust, protect the client's reputation, address accountability concerns, and avoid lasting damage by:

1. Promptly and strategically responding to the immediate situation underlying the crisis,
2. Improving compliance programs and
3. Closely assessing risk management results.

We help efficiently and effectively resolve the exigent crisis, develop a strategic defense plan, and assess remedial steps to deter repeat, high-impact incidents.

## PRACTICE CHAIR

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Deborah  
Fox  
PRINCIPAL

## ATTORNEYS

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Deborah Fox  
Catherine Carlisle  
Matthew Nazareth  
Jenny Riggs  
David Mehretu  
Kristof Szoke

## EXPERIENCE

### NATURAL & MAN-MADE DISASTERS

#### County of Los Angeles – Chiquita Canyon Landfill

At the center of widespread media attention, residents near a Santa Clarita Valley landfill have filed over 25,000 odor complaints with the South Coast Air Quality Management District—a volume unprecedented in the District’s 50-year history—describing smells like “rotten eggs, sour milk, and cheap perfume” that cause headaches, nausea, nosebleeds, and “constant anxiety” about health impacts, forcing families indoors. Meyers Nave brought Los Angeles County’s nuisance abatement action over the underground smoldering event driving these complaints. In 2026, the District Court granted the preliminary injunction; the Ninth Circuit dismissed the ensuing challenge on May 27, 2026, and the matter has returned to the District Court to complete injunctive relief protecting the Castaic community.

#### County of Santa Barbara – Thomas Fire and Montecito Debris Flow Litigation

Defended the County when Southern California Edison, whose lines started the fire, sued to shift its own wildfire liability onto the government entities that answered the emergency. Across 200 lawsuits, 3,000 plaintiffs, and 70 plaintiff firms, two dispositive rulings cut more than \$1 billion from Edison’s claims against the County. The matter is resolved. The [full defense story](#) runs deeper.

#### County of Maui – The Lahaina Fires

Led strategic planning for the County’s defense of litigation from fires that caused more than 100 deaths and \$40 billion in damage across more than 2,000 structures, spanning more than 500 individual cases and several class actions, including a third-party complaint naming cell carriers for failing to timely report tower failures. The path resolved in a \$4.1 billion global settlement.

#### City of Pasadena – The Eaton Fire Demurrer

Defended the City against Edison’s attempt to pass its Eaton Fire liability to the city that burned. The court sustained the City’s demurrer in its entirety, without leave to amend, dismissing Edison’s indemnity cross-complaint (as of July 2026).

#### County of Orange – The Airport Fire Program

Selected by the Board of Supervisors in 2024 for wildfire and crisis management legal services following the Airport Fire. We built and ran a mediation program within four months, and the engagement has resolved more than 1,400 claims and lawsuits totaling in excess of \$160 million.

#### County of Calaveras – Recovering the Butte Fire’s Costs

Pursued the County’s damages against PG&E after the 2015 Butte Fire consumed 71,000 acres and destroyed 921 structures, building the damage estimates with experts, drafting the operative complaint including inverse condemnation, and handling confidential settlement negotiations.

## Northern California Power Agency – The Mosquito Fire

Affirmative litigation against PG&E arising from the 2022 Mosquito Fire, which destroyed more than 76,000 acres and 78 structures, as PG&E attempts to deflect liability onto other entities responsible for managing the power grid.

## Kincade Fire – An Eight-Figure Recovery

Represented the owner of the largest property impacted by the 2019 Kincade Fire, caused by PG&E equipment failure, recovering the cost of repairing an 8,000-acre property in an eight-figure settlement.

## Celebron v. City of Palmdale, et al., Simmons v. Palmdale, and Faulk v. Palmdale – The 1,000-Year Storm

Successfully defended the City of Palmdale in actions brought by more than 30 plaintiffs involving inverse condemnation, nuisance, negligence, and trespass claims as a result of a massive 2015 rain storm that caused substantial flash flooding and debris flow. The storm was rated to have a “return frequency” of 1000 years and overwhelmed the City’s public improvements. Victories include negotiating a dismissal from one action soon after the filing of the action, winning a dispositive motion for summary judgment in another case for judgment and obtaining a legal ruling on a summary judgment motion that facilitated the settlement of remaining cases.

## County of Los Angeles and People of the State of California v. Fishback and ABC Waste Management

Achieved a closely watched victory for the County of Los Angeles in a final ruling that awarded \$6.6 million in attorneys’ fees, sanctions and civil penalties plus permanent injunctive relief in a case that involved the illegal transport and dumping of concrete and other construction debris in an ecologically sensitive region in the Santa Susana Mountains. The case was featured on the front page of the Los Angeles Times and Fifth District Supervisor Kathryn Barger described it as “an important victory for communities and the environment.”

## County of Santa Barbara – Regional Waste Facility Dispute

Represented the County in federal litigation over a complex contractual dispute concerning a regionally critical solid-waste and recycling facility.

## County of Los Angeles – City of Calabasas v. County of Los Angeles – Calabasas Landfill Palisades Fire Debris Disposal Litigation

City of Calabasas v. County of Los Angeles. After the 2025 Palisades Fire, federal authorities designated the Calabasas Landfill as a key disposal site for pre-screened debris from the cleanup. The City of Calabasas sued the County, which owns the landfill, and the Sanitation Districts, which operate it, claiming that the disposal violated the landfill’s permit.

Meyers Nave defended the County through 2025 and prevailed at every stage: denial of the City’s request for a temporary restraining order, a successful demurrer, and judgment at trial. The case drew national coverage, including the New York Times, raised environmental and separation-of-powers questions, and required close coordination with

FEMA, the EPA, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The ruling keeps debris removal moving and will shape wildfire recovery and landfill policy.

## PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY EMERGENCIES

### COVID-19 Shelter In Place Orders and Reopening Plans

Defend counties, cities and public officials throughout California in federal litigation challenging Shelter In Place Orders and Reopening Plans related to the coronavirus pandemic. Plaintiffs are providers of religious establishments and various private businesses challenging restrictions that are placed on the operation of their organizations. Obtained victories at the district and appellate court levels which deny plaintiffs' requests for TROs to block enforcement of such Orders and Plans.

### County of Los Angeles v. Southern California Gas Company (Porter Ranch)

Assisted the County of Los Angeles regarding the largest methane gas release in U.S. history. Meyers Nave urgently assessed the legal exposure, consulted with the public health department, and obtained a temporary restraining order and permanent injunction allowing the 3,000 relocated families to remain in safe alternative housing.

### Gish v. Newsom, Cross Culture Christian Center v. Newsom, Best Supplement Guide v. Newsom, County of Yolo, Best Supplement Guide v. Newsom/County of San Joaquin, Disbar v. Newsom, Tuck's Restaurant v. Newsom, RPC Systems v. Amador County, Excel Fitness Fair Oaks v. Newsom, and Abshire v. Newsom

Defended numerous counties, cities, and public officials throughout California in federal and state court litigation challenging shelter-in-place orders, public health orders and reopening plans related to the coronavirus pandemic. Plaintiffs in these cases were single and/or multiple churches, gyms, nail salons, restaurants, wine bars, brew pubs, lodging establishments, and other businesses challenging various restrictions that are placed on the operation of their organizations, as well as individual plaintiffs challenging limitations on travel and assembly rights during the pandemic. These cases also included challenges to enforcement citations and fines that have been issued due to violations of such Orders and Plans. The issues involved complex constitutional questions regarding local and state governmental powers during public health and safety emergencies intertwined with alleged violations of various rights under the California and U.S. Constitutions, ranging from First Amendment freedoms of expression, religion, and assembly to civil rights claims for alleged violations of the due process and equal protection clauses to economic claims under the takings and commerce clauses. Meyers Nave has obtained precedent-setting victories at both the district and appellate court levels. Published decisional victories in these cases include Abshire, Gish, Cross Culture Christian Center, Best Supplement Guide and Disbar at the District Court level. Argued the Ninth Circuit appeals in Abshire and Best Supplement Guide, which both resulted in complete victories affirming the District Court dismissals.

## City of Antioch – SB 330 / Conditions of Approval Housing Development Disputes and COVID-19 Eviction Moratorium Ordinance Defense

Two related disputes with a developer concerning SB 330 and litigation over the conditions of approval imposed on a large housing development, together with the successful defense of a constitutional challenge to the City's COVID-19 emergency ordinance restricting residential evictions and actions to recover unpaid rent.

## GOVERNMENT ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS

### City Corruption Investigation

Meyers Nave assisted a City in a major government corruption investigation of the Mayor and every member of the City Council. The investigation was conducted by a joint federal and state task force involving the FBI, the IRS criminal investigative division, and the District Attorney. This matter involved use of e-discovery to cull through 500,000+ pages of documents from City departments, councilmembers' email accounts, and various City defendants.

### City of Bell Corruption Investigation

The City of Bell, facing a national news scandal that earned the Los Angeles Times a Pulitzer Prize, hired Meyers Nave to conduct investigations regarding misconduct by police officers. Seven city officials were convicted on graft and corruption charges and given sentences ranging from probation to 12 years in prison. Meyers Nave oversaw and coordinated litigation that encompassed a variety of defense cases and cross-complaints. We advised on more than 1,000 Public Records Act requests and coordinating electronic data sought by investigative agencies, including the IRS, SEC, District Attorney and State Controller. Meyers Nave also counseled on new policies and procedures to ensure accountability and transparency among public officials going forward.

## INTERSECTION OF LAW & HIGHLY CHARGED ISSUES FOR SOCIETY

### Straight Pride Event in City of Modesto

The National Straight Pride Coalition applied for a permit to hold a rally in the City of Modesto, creating a crisis that caused local controversy, national debate and international news coverage. Meyers Nave provided the City with First Amendment legal, regulatory, litigation, public relations, and risk and crisis management advice on an ongoing urgent basis. Created a daily playbook for how other cities could handle similar situations.

### County of Amador – General Plan Update (EIR Review, Litigation Defense, and Settlement)

Amador County General Plan Update. Provided legal review of the General Plan Update and its EIR and defended the County in subsequent litigation and successful settlement negotiations. Wildfire protection policies and compliance with state wildfire policies were an important part of the General Plan, and implementation via settlement negotiations.

Our attorneys drafted County policies on wildfire protection, view corridors, dark skies and other legislation that formed the basis of the General Plan implementation and settlement.

## Unnamed multinational technology company – Chemical Injury

### Allegations Defense

Jenny has deep expertise in mass tort and complex litigation, including defense of an international food company against allegations of toxic exposures, defense of a multinational technology company against allegations of chemical injuries, and cases involving catastrophic disasters, including the Thomas Fire/Montecito debris flow, the Maui Fires, and Kincade Fire.

## City of San Clemente – Emergency Shelter Coalition v. City of San Clemente – Challenge to Homeless Shelter Zoning

Emergency Shelter Coalition v. City of San Clemente, Orange County Superior Court Case No. 30-2014-00758880-CU-WM-CJC [Challenge to Homeless Shelter Zoning].

## CLASS ACTION LITIGATION

### Mobility Device Litigation

Represented the City of Walnut Creek and the City of Riverside in federal ADA litigation regarding shared mobility devices (electric scooters and electric bicycles) on public rights of way. Plaintiffs alleged that users ride too fast and improperly park or ride the devices in the public pedestrian rights of way, and that shared mobility devices obstruct access on sidewalks, crosswalks and curb ramps. Successfully obtained dismissals of both public entities at the early stage of these federal proceedings through motions to dismiss in both the Northern and Central Districts.

### Willits, et al. v. City of Los Angeles

Represented the City of Los Angeles in one of the largest federal class action disability lawsuits in the state. Plaintiffs filed several lawsuits seeking to compel the City to install curb cuts and undertake sidewalk repairs throughout the City. The case also involved substantial motion practice, two dozen depositions and two appeals before the Ninth Circuit. The matter resolved on favorable settlement terms.

## EMPLOYEE HEALTH PLAN BANKRUPTCY

### City of Modesto Health Insurance Crisis

The U.S. Department of Labor concluded that the health insurance company that covered City employees had been operating as a Ponzi scheme. The DOL seized control of the insurance company and placed it into receivership, leaving more than \$40 million in unpaid medical claims for 118 employers. More than 800 City employees and their families were stranded without medical insurance coverage and the City faced more than \$8 million in unpaid health claims. Meyers Nave helped the City navigate the insurance liquidation proceedings, pursue recovery from wrongdoers, and shift its workforce to new insurance.

