

JENNY RIGGS

PRINCIPAL

TEL:
213.626.2906

EMAIL:
jriggs@meyersnave.com

OFFICE:
Los Angeles

LANGUAGES:
English



When a fire or a scandal turns into a thousand lawsuits at once, Jenny is the lawyer California governments call.

Jenny Riggs chairs the firm's [Trial & Litigation](#) practice, and she has been trying cases for a quarter century. Cities, counties, districts, and companies bring her the matters that refuse to stay inside one courtroom, the ones running in state and federal court at the same time, sometimes alongside a criminal investigation into the same facts.

Two hundred lawsuits and three thousand plaintiffs after the Thomas Fire. Hundreds of cases after Lahaina. More than fourteen hundred claims after the Airport Fire. Twenty-five thousand odor complaints from one landfill.

Those numbers are the problem before they are the case. Past a certain size, whether an argument ever gets made depends on whether anyone can find the twelve documents that decide it inside several hundred thousand. Jenny built the discovery and evidence protocols the firm's largest matters run on, and that plumbing is why a billion dollars of Edison's damage claims came out of the Thomas Fire case on two motions.

There is a second thing happening in most of her matters, and it is the part outsiders miss. The record is public. She has run a case while the FBI, the criminal division of the IRS, and a district attorney worked the same documents, while the Public Records Act required her client to hand much of it over, and while some of it was posted to a city website so residents could follow along. Nothing gets buried, so everything has to be right the first time.

Jenny also sues. Government clients often need a court to order conduct to stop and then stay to supervise it, which is harder to win than money and harder to keep. She has taken that relief through preliminary injunction, summary judgment, and permanent injunction, and she has beaten it when it was pointed at a client.

And she tries the cases herself, examining the witnesses and arguing the motions, in trials that have run four and five months. Her pro bono work has always gone the other way, one person at a time, for women seeking restraining orders and for a prisoner who

EDUCATION

Northwestern University School of Law, JD, *cum laude*, 1999

University of Dallas, BA, History, *cum laude*, 1992

ADMISSIONS

California, 1999 – Bar No. 204417

Hawaii, 2024 – Bar No. 011869

U.S. District Court, Northern District of California

U.S. District Court, Central District of California

U.S. District Court, Eastern District of California

U.S. District Court, Southern District of California

U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit

PRACTICE AREAS

Trial & Litigation

Commercial Litigation

wanted to practice his religion.

Disasters are getting larger and the litigation after them is getting faster. What decides those cases is who was ready before the first complaint was filed.

Crisis Management

Eminent Domain & Inverse
Condemnation

First Amendment

Writs & Appeals

Labor & Employment

HONORS & AWARDS

- *Best Lawyers in America*, Commercial Litigation (2026–2027)
- Volunteer of the Year, Los Angeles Center for Law and Justice (2010)

PROFESSIONAL & COMMUNITY AFFILIATIONS

- The State Bar of California, Member
- California Women Lawyers, Member
- Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles, Member

PRESENTATIONS & PUBLICATIONS

- Presenter, *Fires, Floods, Landslides, & Debris Flows: Crisis Management Best Practices*, County Counsels' Association of California (December 3, 2021)
- Presenter, *Fires, Floods, Landslides, and Debris Flows: Crisis Management Best Practices*, County Counsels' Association Fall Land Use Conference (December 3, 2020)
- Presenter, *Public Works Liabilities for Catastrophic Disasters*, County Counsels' Association Fall Public Works & Contracts Conference (2020)
- Presenter, *What is the California Consumer Privacy Act?*, LSI webinar (2020)
- Presenter, *It Just Isn't Fair: Unfair Competition Claims*, LSI Conference (2019)
- Presenter, *e-Discovery*, 17th Annual Eminent Domain Conference, CLE International (2015)

REPRESENTATIVE EXPERIENCE

Catastrophic Wildfire and Disaster Litigation. Defense of public entities in the largest disaster matters in California and Hawai i.

-
- **County of Santa Barbara, Thomas Fire and Montecito Debris Flow** – Defense of the County against Southern California Edison's cross-complaint alleging that negligent acts and omissions of public entities contributed to the deaths, injuries and losses for which Edison was itself being sued, in a matter spanning 200 lawsuits, 3,000 plaintiffs and 70 plaintiffs' firms asserting billions of dollars of liability. A November 2023 ruling excluded \$700 million in claimed damages and an April 2024 ruling excluded more than \$300 million further, for rulings excluding more than \$1 billion in total.
 - **County of Maui, 2023 Lahaina Wildfires** – Support to local counsel defending litigation arising from fires that killed at least 100 people and destroyed more than 2,000 structures, across hundreds of cases and thousands of plaintiffs in state and federal court. The role included building the case and document management systems, motion practice in the coordinated and class proceedings, and overall litigation strategy.
 - **County of Orange, Airport Fire** – Wildfire and crisis management counsel following the September 2024 fire, including a mediation program built and running within four months that has resolved more than 1,400 claims and lawsuits totaling in excess of \$160 million, among them Cal Fire's \$17 million claim.
 - **City of Palmdale, Thousand-Year Storm** – Defense against more than 30 plaintiffs bringing inverse condemnation, nuisance, negligence and trespass claims after a 2015 storm rated at a 1,000-year return frequency overwhelmed the City's improvements, including dismissal of one action within months, summary judgment in another on the ground that the storm broke the causal chain, and a ruling that settled the remainder with minimal contribution from the City.

Environmental Enforcement and Public Nuisance. Affirmative cases where the public entity is the one asking a court to make conduct stop.

- **Illegal Dumping in the Santa Susana Mountains** – Built on drone surveillance and more than 500 exhibits, obtained a preliminary injunction barring Class 6 and heavier trucks from an illegal waste disposal operation in an ecologically sensitive area, then summary judgment, then a permanent injunction. The court awarded \$4,893,000 in civil penalties for zoning, grading and building code violations, \$800,000 under the Unfair Competition Law, and \$945,192.33 in fees, totaling \$6,638,192.33.
- **Chiquita Canyon Landfill** – Nuisance abatement over an uncontrolled underground reaction beneath a Santa Clarita Valley landfill that grew from 30 acres to more than 90, releasing noxious gases and toxic leachate and drawing more than 25,000 odor complaints to the air district. The district court granted a \$20 million preliminary injunction funding temporary relocation for the 938 most affected households.
- **Calabasas Landfill** – Defense of the County's wildfire debris disposal after the 2025 Los Angeles fires, when federal authorities designated the landfill to receive Palisades debris pre-screened by the U.S. EPA and the Army Corps. The temporary restraining order was denied, a key demurrer sustained, and the County prevailed at trial.
- **Palos Verdes Coast Landslides** – Lead counsel in the series of cases arising from the

landslides along the Palos Verdes coastline.

Government Integrity and Public Scrutiny. Litigation and investigations conducted where the record itself is public.

- **Municipal Corruption Investigation** – Support to a city through a joint federal and state investigation of the mayor and every member of the city council conducted by the FBI, the criminal investigation division of the IRS and the District Attorney, with electronic discovery running to more than 500,000 pages from city departments, councilmember email accounts and individual defendants, every page also assessed under the Public Records Act, and selected material posted to the city's website so residents could follow the investigation.
- **Concealed Recording Device Inquiry** – Investigation into the use of a concealed recording and listening device in a municipal building, potentially involving both elected officials and senior staff.
- **Transit Agency Executive Investigation** – Investigation of allegations against a senior executive concerning execution of responsibilities, accuracy of reporting to the agency, and improper influence over recruitment and hiring.

First Amendment and Land Use Defense. Defense of municipal ordinances against constitutional challenge.

- **City of Chula Vista, Adult-Use Zoning** – Permanent injunction closing an adult business that violated the City's zoning code, together with the City's cost bill, validating the constitutionality of the adult zoning and licensing ordinance the firm drafted.
- **City of Oceanside, Digital Billboard** – Defense of the City's denial of an application to operate a digital billboard in a City right-of-way, winning dismissal on demurrer and under the anti-SLAPP statute, with judgment and an award of attorneys' fees.
- **City of Modesto, Adult-Use Federal Defense** – Dismissal obtained before discovery began in federal claims brought by the operator of a proposed adult business, along with advice to Modesto and Ventura on revisions to adult-use ordinances, including urgency and moratorium ordinances.
- **County of Los Angeles, Land Use and Retaliation Series** – Defense in a series of federal and state actions asserting land use, civil rights and takings, and First Amendment retaliation claims, with the original case settled after a Rule 68 offer and the remainder on appeal following successful motions to dismiss and for summary judgment.

Disability Access. Defense of public entities in access litigation reaching entire systems rather than single sites.

- **City of Los Angeles, Pedestrian Right-of-Way Class Action** – Defense of a federal class action alleging failures to install and maintain accessible sidewalks, crosswalks

and curb cuts, with discovery reaching nearly every office and department of the City including legacy systems, resolved on favorable settlement terms.

- **County of San Bernardino, Effective Communication** – Federal litigation over whether County Hospital personnel provided effective communication to hearing-impaired patients, settled with both the plaintiff and the U.S. Department of Justice on terms beneficial to the County, along with favorable settlement of a second federal accessibility action.

Commercial and Products Trials. Long trials for private defendants.

- **Microelectronics Company** – Four-month trial in San Jose to a unanimous defense verdict, later recognized as a Top Defense Verdict of the Year.
- **Multinational Manufacturer Toxic Tort** – Five-month Los Angeles trial brought by multiple foreign plaintiffs, producing a split verdict later overturned on appeal because of the plaintiffs' fraud.
- **Respirator Manufacturer** – Defense of personal injury and product liability actions across California, including successor liability claims.
- **Transit Agency Tunneling Claims** – Defense against competing claims by a tunneling contractor and prosecution of the agency's cross-claims over differing site conditions, defective specifications, delay, liquidated damages and chemical grouting costs.
- **Water District Swap Rescission** – Affirmative suit seeking rescission of an interest rate derivative swap transaction, disgorgement of the fees defendants earned, and fraud damages.

Pro Bono. Representation of women seeking domestic violence restraining orders, and of a California state prisoner enforcing his First Amendment right to practice his religion.