

# LAND USE & ENVIRONMENTAL

## One of California's Largest & Most Accomplished Benches

No state puts more law between a major project and its groundbreaking than California. CEQA and NEPA, the Coastal Act, the state and federal Endangered Species Acts, Porter-Cologne and the Clean Water Act, and a planning code that runs from the general plan to the last condition of approval. Each one is a place where a project can lose its schedule, and most of them are enforceable by anyone with a filing fee. Meyers Nave exists for the owners who have to get through all of it.

### Statewide Relationships & Influence

Most of that law is administered by people, and we know them. Two of our attorneys have served since 2006 as co-managing editors and chapter authors of *California Land Use Practice*, the state's most authoritative treatise on the subject, so the agencies applying these statutes are working from what we wrote. We are in front of the air districts, the resource agencies, the coastal staff, and the city planning departments every week, for the owners and for the agencies themselves, across Government & Public Policy, Transportation & Infrastructure, and Supply Chain & Logistics.

So we start earlier than the application. We find the agencies with jurisdiction, the neighbors with standing, and the groups that will object, and we sit with them while the project can still change shape. An objection raised at a hearing costs a year. The same objection raised in a room in March costs an afternoon. We build agreement on the core issues at the beginning, while it is still cheap.

And we build the record anyway. A high-profile project is a high-profile target, and the agreement that holds with four agencies will not always hold with the fifth party who has a filing fee. **The record we assemble to persuade a regulator is the record that beats a challenger.** One document, two jobs.

Both jobs take a bench. Meyers Nave fields one of the largest and most accomplished land use, environmental, and water law practices in California, at any firm size, and more than 30 attorneys and professionals work these matters as one group. We do not separate litigation from regulatory advice, so the lawyer who shepherds your EIR is one who defends EIRs in court, and the challenge, when it comes, is argued by people who know how the record was built because they built it. What that buys an owner is time and certainty, the two things California's process is engineered to take. Objections answered before they become filings, an approval assembled for the courtroom before anyone reaches it, and one group accountable from the first planning memo to the California Supreme Court.

### PRACTICE CHAIR

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Amrit  
Kulkarni  
PRINCIPAL

### ATTORNEYS

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Deborah Fox  
Amrit Kulkarni  
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Margaret Rosequist  
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Shaye Diveley  
Anthony Amara  
Adam Lindgren  
David Mehretu  
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Julia Bond  
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Mina Arasteh  
Seena Samimi  
Margaret Sohagi  
R. Tyson Sohagi  
Nicole Gordon  
Mark Desrosiers

## What We Do

- **Air Quality** – representing clients before the California Air Resources Board, air quality management districts, and airport land use commissions, and defending the air quality analyses that carry major approvals
- **CEQA/NEPA** – environmental review across the full project lifecycle, from project description through record certification, and the writs and appeals that follow
- **Climate Change & Sustainability** – greenhouse gas analysis, climate planning, and the agreements that move major projects through California's decarbonization mandates
- **Energy, Utilities & Renewables** – environmental review and permitting for the transmission, generation, and storage projects rebuilding California's grid, including more than 40 major grid projects since 2006
- **Hazards & Remediation** – contaminated site cleanup, cost recovery, and enforcement defense under CERCLA, RCRA, and California law, on both sides of the caption
- **Land Entitlements** – general and specific plans, zoning, development agreements, and the approvals that carry a project from concept to groundbreaking
- **Wildlife & Natural Resources** – endangered species compliance, habitat strategy, and the resource agency coordination that keeps projects moving

Blake Senet  
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## Who We Serve

Ports, airports, railroads, and utilities. The university systems planning decades of campus growth. Cities, counties, and the special districts that plan, water, and power the state. And the private owners building alongside them, from Class I railroads to the developers of master-planned communities. The practice is chaired by Amrit Kulkarni, who also chairs the firm's Transportation & Infrastructure industry practice, a reflection of how deeply the two disciplines integrate on the projects we handle.

## Industries We Serve

We help build California.

- **Government & Public Policy** – government entities' own facilities, plans, and the approvals they must defend
- **Real Estate & Housing** – urban, mixed-use, and housing development from entitlement through approval defense
- **Sports & Entertainment** – stadiums, arenas, and entertainment districts through environmental review and challenge
- **Supply Chain & Logistics** – ports, rail gateways, and the freight corridors that move California's goods
- **Transportation & Infrastructure** – transit extensions, airports, and highway programs from scoping through defense
- **Water Resources** – dams, reservoirs, treatment plants, and the permits that govern them

## Why Meyers Nave

The owners who hire us tend to arrive with the same profile of project. The schedule is political, the opposition is organized, the record will be read by a judge, and the entitlement is the asset. And we are more cost-effective than any other land use and environmental counsel in California, larger or smaller. The reason is the model. We pair elite talent and the bench strength of the largest firms with the surgical precision and client service of a boutique, built over more than four decades for the most cost-conscious government, private, and non-profit clients in California. That's why we are the go-to firm when the stakes are high, the path isn't clear, or the project just has to happen.

Approving comes before building, and the same project keeps moving after the record is certified, into delivery contracts, procurement, and the claims that follow groundbreaking. We follow it there; that part of the story lives at Construction.

## EXPERIENCE

### BNSF Railway – Rebuilding How California's Goods Move

Lead counsel to BNSF Railway on the Barstow International Gateway, a \$4.5 billion, 4,500-acre integrated rail facility and one of the largest private freight infrastructure investments in California history, carried through Barstow City Council approval and the state's first SB 149 expedited judicial review certification.

### Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA)

Since 2011, Meyers Nave has assisted VTA on land use and environmental matters for implementation of long-range plans to expand public rail transit into the South Bay and Silicon Valley, including bringing BART from Fremont through San Jose to Santa Clara through a multi-phased, six-station project, which runs through several local jurisdictions, and incorporates transit-oriented development and integration with existing facilities, including parking considerations. Our work spans the CEQA and NEPA process (from review of plans through litigation and appeals, including a legal challenge from the San Jose Sharks regarding impacts on parking), Section 404 permitting, and coordination with FTA and other local, state and federal agencies. We also have advised VTA on projects such as the Eastridge to BART Connector/ Capitol Expressway Light Rail and a 3-mile extension of an elevated transit line, where we worked with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) on NEPA review and project funding issues.

### Port of Los Angeles (POLA) Master Plan and Project Implementation

For nearly two decades, Meyers Nave has served as lead environmental compliance and land use permitting counsel for multiple large-scale cargo, shipping and transportation projects for container terminals and dockside intermodal railyards. We have guided major projects through the CEQA, NEPA, Coastal Act, State Lands and other regulatory frameworks, and advised on multiple long-term planning projects, including the Port

Master Plan Update. Currently we serve as lead counsel in high-visibility litigation related to the China Shipping Terminal project, and provide ongoing transactional, land use and CEQA advice on issues related to the expansion of the neighboring Yang Ming Container Terminal. We have also represented POLA and the Port of Long Beach in connection with environmental review of implementation of a program to convert existing diesel trucks to liquid natural gas.

## Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA)

For well over a decade, Meyers Nave has provided guidance and legal defense to LAWA on a broad range of land use and environmental issues involving CEQA, NEPA, the California Coastal Act, the Federal Coastal Zone Management Act, federal and state endangered species laws, as well as requirements under the Clean Air Act and California's State Implementation Plan.

- **Enabling and Defending LAX's \$13 Billion Master Plan**
- **Investigative Order Regarding PFAS in Groundwater at LAX**
- **Modernizing Air Cargo Facilities at LAX**
- **Correcting Matters Before Air Quality Regulators**
- **Ground Leases, Leases, and Licenses at Van Nuys Airport**

## Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA) – LAX Landside Access

### Modernization Program (LAMP) EIR

Special CEQA counsel to Los Angeles World Airports, reviewing the planning documents and EIRs behind critical LAX projects, including the Landside Access Modernization Program bringing the Automated People Mover, consolidated rental-car center, and new roadway connections to LAX.

## Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA) – Modernizing Air Cargo

### Facilities at LAX (Century Boulevard Corridor)

Land use and environmental counsel for the redevelopment and modernization of the air cargo facilities along LAX's Century Boulevard corridor, optimizing land use and cargo throughput for one of the world's busiest airports.

## University of California, San Francisco (UC San Francisco) – UC San

### Francisco – Parnassus Heights

Meyers Nave worked with co-counsel to advise UCSF on the preliminary injunction brought against the campus associated with the plan to redevelop the Parnassus site, including the construction of a new hospital, successfully defeating the effort to enjoin the project.

## University of California Merced – UC Merced 2020 Project – \$1.2B

### P3 Social Infrastructure Master Development Plan

We also advise on and protect individual UC development projects, including many that use creative funding models and P3s implemented under Meyers Nave's guidance. For example, this includes the \$1.2 billion UC Merced 2020 Project.

## Port of Los Angeles – Yang Ming Container Terminal / West Basin Redevelopment Project (Berths 121-131)

Yang Ming Container Terminal/West Basin Redevelopment Project (Berths 121-131). Meyers Nave advises the Port on all CEQA issues related to the expansion of Yang Ming Container Terminal.

## University of California, San Diego (UC San Diego) – Hillcrest Medical Center CEQA Compliance & Litigation for New LRDP

Meyers Nave advised UC San Diego on the plan to replace a 57-year-old hospital and 36 other buildings with up to 1.4 million gross square feet in new medical facilities.

## Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) – San Fernando Basin – Recycled Water Program and Water Rights/Permitting Counsel

Counseling LADWP on transactional matters regarding recycled water, environmental permitting compliance, and water rights for numerous projects.

## Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP)

Meyers Nave has worked with LADWP on dozens of significant litigation and regulatory matters over the past decade involving reservoirs, aqueducts, water transfer systems, as well as the development of solar energy and alternative energy facilities. These matters cover a range of issues, including CEQA, NEPA, water rights, contamination, contractual disputes, federal and state Endangered Species Act, California Coastal Act and other natural resource laws.

## UC Multi-Campus Long-Range Development Plans and Implementation

For more than a decade, Meyers Nave has served as lead land use and environmental counsel to the University of California on many high-profile and complex capital development projects across the statewide system. We advise UC on the CEQA review of new Long Range Development Plans (LRDPs) to guide future development on campuses throughout the UC system for UC Davis, UCLA, UC Merced, UC Santa Cruz, and UC San Diego. We help guide the campuses through the CEQA, Coastal Act and other regulatory approval process for projects that add and expand administration offices, student and workforce housing, student services, academic buildings, research centers and healthcare facilities.

These LRDPs are the blueprints for decades of growth, and they carry millions of square feet of housing, academic buildings, research centers, and medical facilities for tens of thousands more students than the campuses hold today.

## Sacramento Kings Golden 1 Center

Meyers Nave was instrumental in serving as outside counsel to the City of Sacramento with the development, in conjunction with its private partners, of the \$477 million downtown arena for the Sacramento Kings NBA team, a fast-tracked project that has been transformative for the City and its downtown core. Meyers Nave advised the City on

multiple legal and regulatory issues, including eminent domain and CEQA, and defeated every legal challenge attempted against the project, including allegations that the public-private partnership supporting the arena engaged in a “secret subsidy,” collusion, fraud, waste and illegal expenditure of public funds. The victory was recognized by the Daily Journal as a “Top Defense Result.”

### City of Oakland / Port of Oakland – Howard Terminal Ballpark & Mixed-Use (\$12B)

Land use and environmental counsel for the proposed \$12 billion waterfront ballpark district at Howard Terminal, including CEQA strategy, entitlements, and AB 734 expedited judicial review certification for the Oakland A’s project.

### City of Anaheim – DisneylandForward

DisneylandForward is a once-in-a-generation project – the first major update to Disneyland’s development blueprint since the 1990s.

### UC Berkeley – Make UC a Good Neighbor v. Regents (2024) 16 Cal.5th 43

Lead counsel successfully representing the Regents of the University of California in a CEQA case before the California Supreme Court involving UC Berkeley’s Long Range Development Plan and a student and supportive housing project proposed at the site known as “People’s Park.” The case involved questions related to whether CEQA applies to “student party noise” and when CEQA requires analysis of off-site alternatives.

### Imperial County – Lithium Valley Specific Plan

Meyers Nave is advising Imperial County on all aspects of the Lithium Valley Specific Plan and its associated EIR. The Specific Plan sets forth a comprehensive framework to turn the Imperial Valley into a hub for renewable energy, mineral recovery, manufacturing, and logistics across 51,786 acres adjacent to the Salton Sea, providing for geothermal energy, lithium extraction, battery production, and restoration of the Salton Sea. The plan is positioned to help California decarbonize the electricity sector and is a crucial pillar of the California Air Resources Board’s 2022 Scoping Plan to address climate change.

### UC Santa Cruz – Community Water Coalition v. Santa Cruz LAFCO (2011) 200 Cal.App.4th 1317

Successfully represented University of California, Santa Cruz, in a lawsuit challenging the university’s ability to apply to the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) for water service associated with the future expansion of its North Campus.

### City of Anaheim – ocV!BE

Counsel to the City of Anaheim on entitlements, environmental review, and related matters for ocV!BE, the \$3 billion, 95-acre mixed-use entertainment district surrounding the Honda Center, entitled on schedule for its planned Phase One opening.