

PARTNER

Amy Hoyt

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Riverside

For more than 30 years, Amy Hoyt has achieved victories in trial and appellate courts for cities, counties and special districts in environmental and public law litigation matters. Amy is a Certified Appellate Specialist, certified by the State Bar of California Board of Legal Specialization. She has extensive experience successfully litigating cases involving the myriad of issues facing public agencies, including matters involving the California Environmental Quality Act, the National Environmental Policy Act and other state and federal environmental laws, planning and zoning law, regulatory takings and writs challenging administrative and legislative decisions. Complementing her work in the courtroom, Amy counsels public agencies and developers on compliance with CEQA, NEPA and other environmental laws.

Successful Litigator

Amy successfully litigates actions raising claims under a variety of environmental laws, including CEQA and NEPA. With respect to CEQA, she has defeated challenges to statutory exemptions, negative declarations, addenda and environmental impact reports on a variety of projects, including:

- a proposed NFL stadium,
- adoption of initiative and bond measures,
- projects involving California's State Water Project,
- national retailer "superstore" projects and
- public agency land use documents such as regional plans, general plans and specific plans.

She has also defeated planning and land use challenges to project approvals, including general plan inconsistency claims and attacks on the validity of general plans, specific plans and municipal ordinances. In additional to her experience in environmental and land use litigation, Amy successfully represents public agencies in writ actions challenging administrative and legislative decisions.

Certified Appellate Specialist

As a Certified Appellate Specialist, Amy has broad experience before the California Supreme Court, California Court of Appeal and the Ninth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals. Notable victories include:

CORE PRACTICES

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

Environmental Law & Natural Resources

Environmental Litigation

Land Use, Planning & Zoning

Municipal Law

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

Public Agency Litigation

Special Districts

EDUCATION & ADMISSIONS

Education

Loyola Law School, J.D., cum laude

Loyola Marymount University, B.A., history, cum laude

Bar Admissions

California

- *Planning and Conservation League v. Department of Water Resources* – Represented intervening water agencies in coordinated CEQA and validation actions. Successfully defended challenge to amendments to long-term State Water Project water contracts (2024)
- *City of Hesperia v. Lake Arrowhead Community Services District* – Represented district in writ challenge to solar photovoltaic project approved under the State's renewably energy self-generation bill credit transfer (RES-BCT) program (2023)
- *La Mirada Avenue Neighborhood Association. of Hollywood v. City of Los Angeles* — Represented the lead agency in a CEQA challenge to the City's adoption of revised zoning ordinance that allowed construction of superstore. The Court of Appeal upheld the City's action. (2018)
- *CREED-21 v. City of Wildomar* — Represented the lead agency in a CEQA challenge to superstore construction. The Court of Appeal upheld terminating sanctions issued based on the petitioner's flagrant violation of discovery. (2017)
- *Garau v. Torrance Unified School District* — Represented School District in appeal challenging the trial court's award of attorneys' fees to the District under Code of Civil Procedure section 1038 based on plaintiff's frivolous tort claims. The Court of Appeal upheld the award of $644,000 in attorneys' fees to the District. (2017)
- *Bridges v. City of Wildomar* — Represented the City in a challenge to its election procedures. The Court of Appeal upheld the City's procedures. (2015)
- *Rancho de Calistoga v. City of Calistoga* — Represented the City in a challenge to its rent control ordinance. The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the ordinance. (2015)
- *Guggenheim v. City of Goleta* — Successfully petitioned for en banc review in a rent control challenge. The Court of Appeal upheld the City's rent control ordinance. (2010)
- *City of Goleta v. Superior Court* — Represented the City in California Supreme Court in a challenge to newly incorporated City's land use authority. The Court upheld the City's action. (2002)

Accolades

- The Best Lawyers in America®, Land Use and Zoning Law, 2025, 2026-2027
- IMLA Amicus Service Award, 2024, 2025, 2026
- Leadership Riverside Program Class of 2022

Professional & Community Involvement

- Board of Directors, Riverside Area Rape Crisis Center
- Board of Directors, Riverside Downtown Partnership

Thought Leadership

Publications

- *Quarterly Environmental Law Update*, California State Bar Environmental Law Section, contributing author, 2016 to present
- Finance and Economic Development Chapter, *California Municipal Law Handbook*, editor, 2016-2017
- "Big Changes on Horizon for Traffic Impact Analysis Under CEQA," *Northern* News, October 2014
- "Sue Now, Pay Later – A New Standard for Challenging Taxes?" *Public Law* Update, November 2009

Presentations

- “Make UC a Good Neighbor v. UC Regents: The Future of Town-Gown Housing Dynamics Under CEQA,” Association of Environmental Professionals State Conference, April 8, 2025
- “CEQA Challenges in the California Cannabis Industry,” Webinar, Practicing Law Institute, January 10, 2023
- CEQA 101: A Step-by-Step Approach,” Virtual Workshop, California Special Districts Association, March 9, 2021
- “Everything You Say Can and Will Be Held Against You - CEQA Administrative Records,” Association of Environmental Professionals Virtual Conference, Nov. 10, 2020
- “Cannabis Revisited,” Environmental Law Section Webinar, Orange County Bar Association, Oct. 6, 2020
- “CEQA 201: Beyond the Basics,” Virtual Workshop, California Special Districts Association, July 29, 2020
- “CEQA 101: A Step-by-Step Approach,” Virtual Workshop, California Special Districts Association, July 28, 2020
- “CEQA 101 & 201: Basics and Beyond,” Workshop, California Special Districts Association, Feb. 6, 2020
- “What is So Fair about the ‘Fair Argument’ Test Anyway,” Association of Environmental Professionals California State Conference, March 25, 2019
- “CEQA 101 & 201: Basics and Beyond,” CSDA Professional Development Workshop, California Special Districts Association, March 6, 2019