

PARTNER

Mary Beth Coburn, P.E.

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San Diego / Houston / Sacramento

Mary Beth Coburn, a partner with Best Best & Krieger LLP, is also a California licensed professional civil engineer with more than a decade of experience in design and construction of public facilities. She held positions with Los Angeles County Department of Public Works and several consulting engineering firms prior to law school.

For over twenty-five years, Mary Beth's primary practice has focused on public works and infrastructure construction law, including construction contracting and construction claims resolution. Her unique combination of "hands on" engineering experience and construction law provide clients with efficient, practical and comprehensive legal services. Mary Beth understands what it takes to get a project built and what delays and claims can do to that process.

Mary Beth is adept at assisting public agencies and private owners with all aspects of the construction process, including construction document preparation, bid protests, subcontractor substitution and default, contractors' claims, stop notices, and project close out. She currently assists regional public agencies on contract drafting utilizing cutting edge procurement methods, including CM/GC and Progressive Design Build.

Mary Beth routinely works with all types of public agencies on all issues related to construction of public facilities, from master planning through claims resolution. She often assists clients with latent construction defects long after construction projects have been closed out and warranty periods have lapsed.

Mary Beth has successfully terminated contractors for failure to perform and routinely works with sureties on various payment and performance bond issues, including surety takeover of projects in default. She also has experience in false claim actions against contractors for inflating or falsely submitting extra work claims.

CORE PRACTICES

Municipal Law

Public Agency Litigation

Public Infrastructure

Special Districts

Education Law

Airports

EDUCATION & ADMISSIONS

Education

University of San Diego School of Law, J.D.

Michigan Technological University, B.S., civil engineering

Bar Admissions

California

Mary Beth is frequently called upon to provide public works training sessions to assist firm clients in proper procurement practices, claims avoidance and dispute resolution as well as disaster recovery and resiliency utilizing federal funding.

Mary Beth is a member of the San Diego County Bar Association and the American Society of Civil Engineers.

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Accolades

- The Best Lawyers in America®, Construction Litigation, 2019–2026
- Litigation - Construction Lawyer of the Year in San Diego, Best Lawyers®, 2020

Professional & Community Involvement

- San Diego County Bar Association
- American Society of Civil Engineers

Thought Leadership

Presentations

- "The Evolution Is Now: Alternative Project Delivery and the Evolving Role of County Counsel," County Counsels Association Fall Public Works & Contracts Study Section Meeting, Nov. 5, 2026
- "The Evolution Is Now: Alternative Project Delivery Methods and What It Means for Municipal Attorneys," International Municipal Lawyers Association Annual Conference Sept. 24, 2026
- "Navigating Alternate Delivery Model Projects Through Shifting Legal and Policy Winds," The U.S. Infrastructure Development Conference, June 3, 2026
- "Procurement Under Pressure: Managing Tariffs, Risk Allocation, and Compliance in the Evolving Landscape of Public Infrastructure Contracting," International Municipal Lawyers Association Annual Conference WONK Breakfast, Oct. 20, 2025
- "Just When You Think You've Got It – They Change It!" International Municipal Lawyers Association Annual Conference, Sept. 27, 2024
- "Piloting a New Approach To Securing and Executing Federal Funds for Flood Mitigation Projects," TX-APWA 2024 Annual Conference, Jun. 4, 2024
- "The Countdown to Encumbered: The 12/31/24 Sunset of ARPA," International Municipal Lawyers Association Annual Conference, Sept. 30, 2023
- "Federal Purse Strings: Best Practices for the Uniform Guidance and Beyond," International Municipal Lawyers Association's Annual Conference, WONK Breakfast, Oct. 21, 2022
- "Getting Along with the Feds: Tips and Best Practices for Infrastructure Projects with a Federal Component," Texas City Attorneys Association Annual Summer Conference, Jun. 16, 2022
- "Leveraging CDBG-CV and Other Federal Funding Grant Opportunities for COVID-19 Response," BB&K Webinar, Jun. 3, 2020
- "Part Two: Leveraging FEMA and Other Federal Grant Funding Opportunities for COVID-19 Response," Apr. 22, 2020
- "Leveraging FEMA and Other Federal Grant Funding Opportunities for COVID-19 Response," Apr. 17, 2020
- "Emergency Procurement & Contracting Essentials: Being Prepared for Federal Disaster Funding," BB&K Webinar, Nov. 29, 2018
- "Federal Contracting 101: What You Need to Understand (and DO) Before Disaster Strikes," International Municipal Lawyers Association's Annual Conference WONK Breakfast, Oct. 20, 2018
- "Looking in the Rearview Mirror on the Costliest Natural Disaster Year in U.S. History," International Municipal Lawyers Association's Annual Conference, Oct. 18, 2018

- "Resiliency Planning," International Municipal Lawyers Association Webinar, Aug. 23, 2018
- "Post Disaster Recovery and Resiliency," International Municipal Lawyers Association Mid-Year Seminar WONK Breakfast, Apr. 22, 2018
- "Developing FEMA Compliant Procurement Procedures," BB&K What's New in Environmental and Special Districts Law Webinar Series, Jan. 18, 2018
- "Land Use: Planning & Zoning for a Resilient Future," International Municipal Lawyers Association Annual Conference, Oct. 15, 2017
- "Now Trending: Hot Topics in Public Infrastructure & Right of Way," League of California Cities Public Works Officers Institute & Expo, Mar. 10, 2016
- "Now Trending: Hot Topics in Public Infrastructure," Association of California Water Agencies' CLE '15, Sept. 11, 2015