



Karen M. ZoBell

Partner



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Practice Areas

- Land Use and Environmental Law
- Real Estate Transactions

Noteworthy Experience

- Represents land developers in obtaining land use entitlements and negotiating obligations for infrastructure from various governmental agencies for individual home sites up to master planned communities
- Extensive involvement in the approval of statutory development agreements conferring vested rights for development in various cities and counties, having drafted, negotiated, and obtained approval of numerous development agreements
- Represents various landowners and developers in preparing and obtaining certification by governmental agencies, and defense of environmental documents under the California Environmental Quality Act
- Negotiated remedial action plans with relevant governmental agencies and resolved allocation of responsibility among potentially responsible parties for hazardous material releases, including for former burn landfills
- Negotiated, drafted construction contract, leases, purchase and sale agreements for real estate assets for global agri-business committed to sustainable agriculture through innovative research and technology.
- Assisting client in remediation of burn ash and coordination with relevant agencies in obtaining funding or reimbursement under Brownfield legislation in connection with converting burn ash dump site into river park.
- Represented developer in California in obtaining Army Corps of Engineers 404 permit, California Dept. of Fish and Game 1603 agreement and Regional Water Quality Control Board 401 certification including establishment of mitigation bank approval by multiple agencies for acquisition of mitigation credits.
- Represented a university in permitting for solar panels including requesting legislative counsel opinion to attempt to seek reversal of San Diego City Attorney application of Cal. Gov. Code § 65850.5 which limits review of application for installation of solar energy systems to compliance with health and safety requirements of local, state and federal law

- Represented client in obtaining entitlements including for a mixed-use development, including analyzing incentives under SB 375 for development of sustainable transit oriented development in San Leandro, California.
- Negotiated with various agencies including establishment of fair market value, for sale of property for use as mitigation bank
- Represented a publicly traded home builder in conducting land use and environmental due diligence for the acquisition of a company owning over 40 residential communities totaling approximately 10,000 home sites in jurisdictions throughout the Inland Empire
- Represented a bio-tech client in due diligence, acquisition, permitting, and development of real property for a corporate headquarters and research and development space in Sorrento Valley, San Diego, California, including entity formation, tax planning, and financing
- Represented a developer in the sale of 1,200 residential lots to 12 different builders in a master planned community in San Diego County, approximately \$100 million in land transactions
- Represented a technology company in the lease of a multi-building corporate headquarters in Carmel Valley, California
- Represented a consortium of three major builders in conducting due diligence for the acquisition of a 2,320-acre project in Northern California

Education

- Stanford University Law School, J.D., 1986
- University of California at Davis, B.A., 1981, Highest Honors

Professional Affiliations and Admissions

- Member of the California State Bar Association
- Member of the San Diego County Bar Association; Real Property Section, Environmental Law/Land Use Section
- Member of the American Bar Association; Real Property, Probate and Trust Section
- Martindale-Hubbell [AV Rated](#)
- Selected for inclusion in The Daily Transcript Top Attorneys - Real Estate/Construction Law finalists, 2010
- Selected for inclusion in *San Diego Super Lawyers®* - Real Estate, Land Use/Zoning, 2007-2010
- Selected for inclusion in *The Best Lawyers in America®* in the specialties of Land Use & Zoning Law and Real Estate Law (2007 - present)
- Co-chair of the Zoning and Land Use Subcommittee of State Bar's Real Property Section, 2002 -present
- Member of the CBIA Land Use & Economic Growth Task Force, 1998 - present
- Member of the BIA Subcommittee on Implementation of SB 375
- Member of the BIA Green Building Task Force, 2009
- Member of the Lawyer's Club

Publications and Speaking Engagements

- "Let the Sunshine In," Los Angeles Daily Journal, February 27, 2009
- Developer Magazine: Karen ZoBell interviewed for article entitled "Before the Storm: Developers Plan for Storm Water Runoff Before They Get Hit by Rains - or Worse, Massive Fines" regarding Clean Water Act and associated local, state and/or federal regulations, Nov./Dec. 2008
- "Development of Senior Communities in San Diego," The Daily Transcript, Tuesday, April 29, 2008

- State Bar of California Webinar: "Recent developments related to global climate change in the land entitlement and environmental review process and guidance issued by the Army Corp of Engineers and EPA in June 2007 interpreting recent Supreme Court case law relating to 404 permit jurisdiction", Oct. 2007
- "Containing Big-Box Retailers: Land Use and Planning Challenges Confronting the Large-scale Retail Industry," California Property Journal, Vol. 25, Number 4, 2007
- "The Boom Cycle in Housing for an Aging Population: Acquisition and Development of Senior Communities," California Property Journal, Vol. 24, Number 4, 2006
- "Considerations to Keep in Mind When Developing a World-Class Destination Resort," March 10, 2003
- "Stakes are High in Affordable Housing Debate," August 13, 2002

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