



Jessica A. Johnson

Associate

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PRACTICE AREAS

- Land Use and Natural Resources

OVERVIEW

Jessica Johnson is an associate in the Land Use and Natural Resources practice group in the firm's Orange County office.

Areas of Practice

Ms. Johnson handles all types of litigation and transactional matters relating to natural resources, the development of land, and eminent domain for businesses, developers, and public agencies. Ms. Johnson has litigated challenges under environmental, land use, and public agency laws, as well as water rights disputes and condemnation proceedings. Her transactional experience includes environmental compliance and real estate due diligence.

Ms. Johnson's areas of special expertise are the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Eminent Domain Law. Ms. Johnson has both represented developers in the defense of CEQA documents for development projects and represented the public interest in CEQA petitions against development projects. Her experience on both sides of the table gives her a unique insight into the mind of the opponent, which strengthens her arguments and ability to negotiate settlement. Ms. Johnson's land use knowledge is also very useful in understanding complex condemnation proceedings, in particular with regard to the impact the agency's project will have on the use of the property taken. She has also litigated matters in inverse condemnation, challenging the agency's denial of her client's development proposal as effectively taking the property.

Ms. Johnson also has depth of experience in obtaining land use entitlements for businesses and developers. She works cooperatively with city and county staff to process entitlements such as general or specific plan amendments, zone changes, development agreements, conditional use permits, and variances. Ms. Johnson represents her clients at public agency hearings to approve development projects. She has also protested development projects adverse to her clients' interests. Ms. Johnson's practice further includes obtaining permits from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the California Department of Fish & Game, the California Coastal Commission, the South Coast Air Quality Management District, and the Regional Water Quality Control Board.

EDUCATION

- J.D., University of California, Hastings College of Law, 2005, Senior Articles Editor of the West-Northwest *Journal of Environmental Law and Policy*; Officer of the Environmental Law Society.
- B.A., Pepperdine University, 2001, *Cum Laude*

MEMBERSHIPS

- Member, California State Bar (Environmental Section)
- Member, Orange County Bar Association (Environmental Section)

ARTICLES

- Adapting Planning and Environmental Approaches to Meet the Challenges of an Urban Residential Mixed-Use Strategy for Smart Growth, *California Real Property Journal*, July 29, 2009
- "Doing Mixed-Use Right By Avoiding The Legal Pitfalls," *California Real Estate Journal*, Summer 2008.
- "Coastal Justice: The Case for Public Access," *West-Northwest Journal of Environmental Law and Policy*, 2004.