



Hanson Bridgett Practice Group Environmental & Natural Resources

Hanson Bridgett's Environmental & Natural Resources Practice Group provides superior value to our clients by delivering high quality services at a fair price, helping clients avoid regulatory pitfalls, and offering practical solutions to environmental problems. We will not simply determine which laws apply in a particular situation, but provide advice on the best way to handle a problem, which comes from real-world experience successfully handling similar matters.

Our Services

We offer a broad range of services to address environmental legal and regulatory issues, including:

Real Property Transactions

In today's world, it is virtually impossible to find a commercial or industrial property which does not bring with it the specter of environmental liability. Whether buying, selling, or leasing real property, developers, landowners, investors and lenders must reduce or eliminate such liability to the extent possible. Because environmental cleanup costs are usually unknown, and often have the potential to be greater than the value of the property, rigid approaches to addressing environmental risks can quickly end a deal. By implementing creative legal solutions to address environmental liability concerns, our environmental attorneys have protected our clients' interests, while successfully closing hundreds of deals involving properties with environmental issues.



Our environmental attorneys work with the firm’s real estate attorneys to assist clients in identifying, evaluating and resolving potential hazardous materials issues in real property acquisitions. This includes participating in the client’s due diligence by analyzing existing documents and Phase 1 Environmental Assessments and, if appropriate, overseeing and analyzing Phase 2 Assessments and other investigations. Where hazardous waste issues exist, our attorneys negotiate and document the acquisition transaction to minimize and control the client’s risk.

Enforcement Defense

In recent years, federal, state and local jurisdictions have toughened their environmental laws, regulations, and ordinances, and correspondingly increased the resources devoted to punishing violators. Environmental Enforcement Task Forces blanket the state, and many rural counties are now home to Environmental Circuit Prosecutors on loan to local District Attorney’s offices for the express purpose of bringing civil and criminal environmental enforcement actions.

Our attorneys have worked on hundreds of administrative, civil and criminal environmental enforcement actions, whether initiated by government officials or through so-called “citizen suits.” We quickly evaluate the strength of the enforcement case and give pragmatic advice on whether to “fight or pay,” recognizing that often such choices are made on the basis of “business decisions” about the anticipated cost of defense. When we fight, we fight to win, and draw on the expertise of the firm’s skilled litigation attorneys.

Compliance Counseling

Environmental compliance is rarely a straightforward matter. Our attorneys work with clients to achieve and maintain compliance with the complex web of environmental laws and regulations pertaining to water quality, air quality and hazardous substances. We assist in identifying and meeting regulatory obligations, whether on a case-by-case basis, or as part of an overall “environmental audit.”

Soil and Groundwater Cleanups

When it comes to environmental cleanups, our attorneys have experience dealing with the full spectrum of sites—from facilities on the U.S. EPA’s National Priorities List to leaking Underground Storage Tanks. Our environmental attorneys are knowledgeable in all aspects of cleanups, including discovery, using due diligence, selecting contractors, overseeing legal aspects of the cleanup itself, and negotiating closure with regulatory agencies. Our attorneys also advise clients on various Brownfields issues, including strategies for properly utilizing powerful laws, such as the Polanco Act to compel cleanup of contaminated urban properties.

We work closely with clients to formulate an overall strategy that focuses on shifting liability where possible and/or obtaining funding for the cleanup, whether from third parties responsible for the contamination, government cleanup funds, or insurance proceeds.

Permitting Assistance

We are skilled at identifying all required permits and negotiating permit terms with the issuing regulatory entities that govern water quality, air quality and hazardous materials. We assist clients in obtaining the local, state and federal permits necessary to run their operations.

In the water quality area, these include NPDES point source discharge and stormwater permits, and related TMDL issues. We also assist with air quality permitting matters, including Title V of the Clean Air Act, and other permits issued by local air districts and applications for variances.

Additionally, our attorneys represent clients in obtaining RCRA permits for the operation of hazardous waste treatment, storage and disposal facilities and other required hazardous materials permits.

Regulatory Advocacy

Our ongoing working relationships with regulators enable us to raise clients' issues to the proper level and gives us the credibility to advocate our clients' positions effectively. When appropriate, we also team with seasoned lobbyists to provide our clients a powerful combination of substantive expertise and access to the legislative process.

We also have established relationships with John Caffrey, former chair of the State Water Resources Control Board, and Jim Morgester, former Chief of the California Air Resources Board's Enforcement Division. Both provide insights and contacts that can be of tremendous help to our clients in navigating through the channels of the state's regulatory agencies.

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