HansonBridgett



Niran S. Somasundaram

Senior Associate

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Areas of Focus

- Land Use
- Environmental Law
- Air Quality / Climate Change / Greenhouse Gases
- Contaminated Property
- Litigation and Dispute Resolution

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Niran Somasundaram focuses his practice on land use, environmental law, and regulatory compliance. He advises landowners, developers, and public agencies on the full spectrum of land use and environmental regulatory matters, including land use due diligence, entitlement strategy, and complex permitting. Niran has deep experience preparing and processing entitlement applications; ensuring compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and related state and local land use and environmental legislation; and representing clients in administrative proceedings before federal, state, and regional agencies — including the Environmental Protection Agency, State Water Resources Control Board, Regional Water Quality Control Boards, and state environmental agencies.

Clients turn to Niran for his extensive experience designing entitlement strategies for housing projects across California, guiding developers, property owners, and public agencies through the state's rapidly evolving housing laws and streamlining tools. His work includes preparing and advancing complex residential projects under Senate Bill 330, the Builder's Remedy, Density Bonus Law, and other state housing laws. He regularly advises clients on strategic use of these laws to maximize development potential, reduce discretionary risk, and capitalize on ministerial or accelerated approval pathways. Niran's hands on experience in drafting statewide housing legislation and shaping statutory reforms, including contributing to revisions of AB 1893 and other Housing Accountability Act updates, strengthen his ability to help clients interpret and

harness new legislative opportunities at the earliest stage.

In addition to housing, Niran frequently leads entitlement efforts for non residential and innovation sector projects throughout California. His experience includes advising clients on the complex land use, zoning, environmental, and infrastructure requirements associated with biotechnology facilities, autonomous vehicle testing and deployment sites, renewable energy and grid resilience infrastructure, and data centers. Across both residential and non residential projects, Niran also has significant experience drafting and negotiating development agreements, leases, and other supporting contracts with public entities.

Niran also advises both private parties and government agencies on compliance with environmental laws at the local, state, and federal levels, including air quality regulations administered by Local Air Districts and the California Air Resources Board, and water quality requirements enforced by the State and Regional Water Boards and the Environmental Protection Agency. In addition, Niran represents clients in administrative proceedings, and in land use and environmental litigation before state and federal agencies and courts. His litigation experience includes drafting and responding to injunctions, preparing pleadings, managing dispositive and procedural motion practice, conducting written discovery, working with expert witnesses, and performing the trial focused work necessary to defend or advance project approvals.

Niran serves as a deputy practice group leader for the firm's land use practice. In addition, he is the firm liaison for the San Francisco Bay Area Planning and Urban Research Association (SPUR), sits on the Greenbelt Alliance's Climate SMART Development Endorsement Committee, and is a member of Urban Land Institute (ULI).

Representative Work

Defending an industrial rendering facility in an administrative enforcement action brought by the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) premised on SCAQMD Rule 415 governing such facilities, and subsequent litigation regarding the facility's compliance with SCAQMD Rule 415.

Representing an industrial cement recycling facility in responding to Notices of Violation (NOVs) from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) alleging particulate emissions in excess of permitted levels.

Assisting a large residential development in creating a legally defensible quantification methodology for the proportion of greenhouse gas reduction required to demonstrate compliance with State of California and CARB climate goals.

Advising numerous private developers and municipalities on compliance with municipalities Climate Action Plans, Local Air District Air Quality Plans (AQPs), the CARB Scoping Plan, and the

federal Clean Air Act.

Advising numerous private developers and municipalities on development of Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) methodology to quantify mobile emissions associated with development projects.

Advising numerous private developers and municipalities on compliance with Air District regulations governing Criteria Air Pollutant (CAP), Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs), Toxic Air Contaminant (TAC), and Greenhouse Gas Emissions associated with construction and operations of developments in urban and rural areas.

Publications

"What the Building an Affordable California Act Means, Practically," co-author, Hanson Bridgett Insights & Analysis (January 2026)

"Chamber Files an Amended Building an Affordable California Act," co-author, Hanson Bridgett Legal Alert (December 2025)

"Building an Affordable California Act Offers Real CEQA Reform for Essential Projects," co-author, Legal Alert (November 2025)

"Justices Widen Gap Between Federal, Calif. Enviro Reviews," co-author, *Law360* (June 2025)

"The Supreme Court Takes Aim at NEPA," co-author, Environmental Legal Alert (May 2025)

"Trucks, Trains, and Automobiles: Untangling the Status of California's Vehicle Emission Waivers," author, Air Quality/Climate Change/Greenhouse Gases Legal Alert (February 2025)

"Key 2025 CEQA Updates for Residential Developers: Extended Exemption and Streamlining Options," co-author, Land Use Legal Alert (January 2025)

"California's Clean Air Act Waiver Victory is in for a Wild Ride," author, *Daily Journal* (January 2025)

"The Builder's Remedy: What Every Developer Should Know," co-author, Land Use Law Legal Alert (March 2023)

"Climate Change Case Could Lead to Resurrection of 'Nondelegation'," *Daily Journal* (November 2021)

"An In-Depth Look at the Oakland A's Proposed New Stadium Project," Land Use Law Alert (September 2021)

"Stop Syar Expansion Decision Demonstrates the Uphill Battle for CEQA Plaintiffs," Land Use Law Alert (August 2021)

"Calif. Warehouse GHG Proposal Would Likely Face Lawsuits," *Law360* (March 2021)

"DC Court of Appeals Strikes Down Trump EPA's ACE Rule," co-author, *Daily Journal* (January 2021)

"Supreme Court of California Weighs In on Blanket Categorization of Well Construction Permit Approvals as Ministerial," *Land Use Law Alert* (September 2020)

"Opening the Golden Door: The Fourth District Shines a Light on CEQA Compliant Greenhouse Gas Mitigation," co-author, *Land Use Law Alert* (June 2020)

"Recent Trends in EPA-Manufacturing Enforcement Actions," co-author, *Industry Today* (June 2020)

"New Bay Area Shelter-in-Place Orders Allow for the Resumption of Environmental Site Remediation and Agricultural Operations," co-author, *Environmental Law Alert* (April 2020)

"U.S. EPA's Temporary Enforcement Policy Provides Needed Guidance During the COVID-19 Pandemic," co-author, *Environmental Law Alert* (March 2020)

Presentations

"Housing Law 101," California Lawyers Association (January 2026)

Press

"La Cañada Flintridge Doubles Down on Builder's Remedy Fight," *The Real Deal* (May 2023)

"How One City's NIMBY Attitude is Being Challenged by Developers Desperate to Build," *Los Angeles Times* (April 2023)

"Biden's Plan for EVs," *ABC 10 News* (August 2021)

"Biden Environment Agenda Spurs Early Pivots, Attacks in Court," *Bloomberg Law* (April 2021)

Honors & Awards

Best Lawyers (2023-2026); Best Lawyers: One to Watch (2025-2027)

California Lawyers Association, Wiley W. Manuel Pro Bono Legal Services Award (2022-2023)

Professional Affiliations

Urban Land Institute

Academic Distinctions

Ecology Law Quarterly, Programs Director, Managing Editor

Environmental Conservation Outreach, SLPS Leader

Education

J.D., University of California, Berkeley School of Law (2016)

B.A., *cum laude* University of California, Los Angeles (2013)

Admissions and Courts

California