HansonBridgett



Sean R. Marciniak

Partner

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Firm Leadership
Land Use Practice Leader
Air Quality Practice Leader

Areas of Focus

- Land Use
- Contaminated Property
- Vineyard and Wine Law
- Air Quality / Climate Change / Greenhouse Gases
- Environmental Law

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As the leader of the firm's Land Use Practice Group, Sean has specialized in land use and environmental law for 20 years. He is a former newspaper reporter and investigator for the state of Texas, and combines skill sets from across disciplines to counsel landowners, developers, and public agencies on all aspects of environmental and land use matters. Having experience in both land use entitlement and litigation, he designs permitting and environmental review strategies for development projects that maximize efficiency and defensibility, while minimizing costs and delays. He also regularly appears at administrative hearings throughout California, and adopts communication strategies that address not only legalities, but common-sense considerations.

Sean and his team have helped entitle millions of square feet of development throughout California, including affordable housing projects, wineries and vineyards, mixed-use development, data centers, regional hospitals, laboratories, pharmaceutical campuses, shopping centers, office campuses, infrastructure projects, terminal expansions, solar energy projects, and intermodal transport facilities at California's busiest ports.

Areas of focus include counseling under the California Environmental Quality Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, planning and zoning law, the Subdivision Map Act, takings and exactions, development agreements, initiatives and referendums, Local Agency Formation Commissions, the Housing Accountability Act, natural resource permitting (including under the

Endangered Species Act and Clean Water Act Sections 401 and 404), and emerging laws addressing climate change and sustainable development.

Prior to joining us, Sean was a shareholder at Miller Starr Regalia, where he helped write and edit sections of land use practice guides, including *Miller & Starr, California Real Estate 4th*, a 12-volume treatise on California real estate law. He began his legal career in the environmental and land use practice at an international law firm, where he edited and wrote sections of other land use treatises and practice guides used across the state. As a journalist, Sean was a crime and investigative reporter in the Texas borderlands. His articles have appeared in publications that include *The Wall Street Journal*, the *Dallas Morning News*, and the *Houston Chronicle*, and have merited awards from the Associated Press and Bloomberg News. As an investigator in Texas, he looked into allegations of judicial misconduct for the State Commission on Judicial Conduct.

Publications

"Shadows and Student Parties: How CEQA Litigation Lost the Plot, and Prop. 45 Fixes It," author, *Daily Journal* (October 2026)

"HCD Clarifies CEQA Exemption for Certain Residential Rezoning Actions," Hanson Bridgett Legal Alert (July 2026)

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

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

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

"Recent Court of Appeal Decision Confirms that CEQA Statutes of Limitations Cannot be Extended Without a Project Proponent's Consent," Land Use Law Alert (July 2021)

"The End of the Line for Exclusionary Zoning: Berkeley Set to Make its Move," Land Use Law Alert (February 2021)

"CEQ Final Rule for Federal Agencies Implementing NEPA," Land Use Law Alert (July 2020)

"CEQA Reform in the COVID Era? The California Senate Housing Production Package Moves Forward," Land Use Law Alert (June 2020)

"Court Clarifies Mitigation Needs for Buried Artifacts, Plants, and Trees," Land Use Law Alert (April 2020)

"Governor Newsom's 'Stay at Home' Order Allows Construction to Continue, but Many Cities and Counties are Banning Most Construction," Construction Law Alert (March 2020)

"Updates to CEQA Technical Advisories on Disaster Response and Housing," Land Use Alert (January 2020)

"The Case Against Formula Retail Ordinances: Understanding the Problem and Crafting Solutions," *Shopping Center Law & Strategy* (October 2017)

"American Tower Corporation v. City of San Diego (2014): Further Guidance From The Ninth Circuit On The Regulation Of Data Towers In California," *Miller Starr Regalia Legal Update* (December 2014)

"Local Matter or Federal Case? The Network of Cell Tower Regulation in California," *California Real Estate Newsalert, Vol. 21, No. 6* (July 2011)

"Back to Basics: Setting the Environmental Baseline Under the California Environmental Quality Act," *California Land Use Law & Policy Reporter* (February 2011)

"NEPA Review and Impacts on Climate Change" (March 2008)

Presentations

"Briefing on CEQA Reform," co-presenter, East Bay Leadership Council (September 2025)

"Warehouse and Logistics Facility Development," co-presenter, CLE International's 2nd Annual Land Use Law Conference (June 2025)

"Midsize and Boutique Law Firm Panel," panelist, Berkeley Law (September 2017)

"Practice Area Table Talks," panelist, Berkeley Law (November 2016)

"Infill Development: Critical Paths & Strategic Entitlement Roadmaps," Miller Starr Regalia (January 2012)

"Development Opportunities in Uncertain Times," Miller Starr Regalia (January 2011)

"Keeping Bay Projects Moving," Bay Planning Coalition Workshop Series (2010)

"Central California Annual Land Use & Planning Conference," Lex and the City (April 2009)

Press

“Prop 45 Explained: CEQA Overhaul Could Shift Who Holds Power Over Building,” CalMatters (October 2026)

Honors & Awards

Super Lawyers, Land Use & Zoning; Environmental (2012–2017, 2023, 2025)

Best Lawyers (2027)

Professional Affiliations

American Bar Association

Bay Planning Coalition, Former Board Member

Contra Costa County Bar Association

Urban Land Institute

Education

J.D., University of California, Berkeley School of Law (2007)

M.A., University of California Graduate School of Journalism (2004)

B.A., Brandeis University (1999)

Admissions and Courts

California