



David E. Cameron Counsel

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Practice Areas

CEQA / NEPA | Endangered Species | Food & Agriculture | Food & Agriculture Litigation | Groundwater Law | Water Law | Water Rights Litigation

David Cameron is a water resources attorney who advises and represents clients regarding water rights and environmental issues throughout California.

David's practice is focused on securing and protecting water rights, the purchase and sale of water rights, compliance with the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), water banking, and related environmental and endangered species issues. His practice includes litigation in state and federal courts, administrative proceedings before the State Water Resources Control Board, public agency representation, as well as transactional water-related matters including due diligence. David enjoys tackling complex legal issues and providing practical solutions to clients, which include water districts, irrigation districts, cities, counties, and agricultural interests large and small.

Experience

Water Rights/Public Agency Representation

- Special Counsel for multiple districts on water rights-related matters.
- Facilitate the purchase and sale of water rights and contractual entitlements to water among public and private entities. Navigate approval through the State Water Resources Control Board and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, and ensure compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act.
- Represent public agencies before the State Water Resources Control Board in protecting existing rights and pursuing new water rights.
- Represent private landowners and public agencies before the State Water Resources Control Board in water rights enforcement matters.
- Counsel public agencies regarding conversion of water service contracts.
- Successfully negotiated provisions of state Wild & Scenic Rivers Act designation to ensure protection of water rights.

- Facilitated water rights and environmental compliance plans for multiple large ranches.
- Prepare water rights due diligence analyses for institutional investors.
- Provide water rights opinions regarding validity and use of riparian, appropriative, and pre-1914 rights.
- Developed agreements for a groundwater recharge project that applies flood water to in-production farmland.
- Counsel clients on Endangered Species Act compliance, including the negotiation of a Habitat Conservation Plan.
- Counsel public agencies regarding compliance with the Brown Act, Proposition 218, and Proposition 26.
- Assist public agencies with Political Reform Act, Government code section 1090, and Public Records Act issues.

The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA)

- Created multiple Groundwater Sustainability Agencies by joint powers agreement and memorandum of understanding.
- Assisted in drafting special act legislation creating an exclusive Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA).
- Assisted with preparing basin boundary modifications.
- Counsel GSA clients regarding options for funding.
- Counsel clients regarding future impacts of SGMA.
- Counsel on the development of groundwater recharge projects, including securing necessary water rights.

Litigation

- Litigate water rights issues throughout California.
- Prevailed on appeal and invalidated groundwater ordinances in the City of Mendocino.
- Defeated CEQA challenge regarding approval of water district operations activity.
- Prevailed on summary judgment on behalf of water district against trespassing landowner and reached global settlement in favor of district.
- Successfully obtained, in collaboration with other attorneys, a preliminary injunction against a large water user that pumped in excess of its decreed rights.
- Drafted briefing that resulted in the denial of a writ of supersedeas and denial of appeal, preserving the trial court's injunction against excessive groundwater pumping.
- Litigated against groundwater bank, settlement of which resulted in limitations on operation of bank that protect nearby landowners.
- Represented landowner in state court and obtained favorable settlement against neighbor who interfered with water supply and conveyance.

- Successfully defended and secured large forester's water rights and point of diversion against interference.
- Obtained successful published opinion regarding the recoverability of attorneys' fees.
- Assisted in the representation of a California county in a multi-million dollar dispute over future hydropower revenue and water rights.
- Assisted in the successful defense of a water district against CEQA challenges, and obtained denial of award of attorneys' fees.
- Successfully represented grower against a well driller for failing to timely develop well.
- Assisted in the successful defense of a well driller against claims of failure to properly site agricultural well.
- Assisted with numerous crop loss cases on behalf of central valley growers, including those caused by spray drift and negligent harvest.
- Assisted in representing citrus growers in a multi-million dollar matter against packers and international shippers.
- Assisted in the successful prosecution of the theft of trade secrets on behalf of a large agri-business client.
- Successfully defended a private landowner and county against consolidated CEQA challenges to land use approvals in collaboration with another attorney.
- Prepared anti-SLAPP motion that resulted in dismissal of lawsuit against a public entity.

Professional & Community Service

- Environmental Law Institute
- Groundwater Resources Association
- Sacramento County Bar Association, Environmental Law Section
- Fresno County Bar Association, Agricultural Law Section
- Fresno County Young Lawyers Association, Officer and Board Member, 2012-2014
- California Bar Association, Environmental Law Section
- California Water Law & Policy Reporter, Contributing Author
- Recognized by Legal Services of Northern California for pro bono support for residents of Butte County following the 2018 Camp Fire

Education

- J.D., University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law, 2011
- B.A., University of California at Berkeley, 2003

Honors & Rankings

- *Super Lawyers*, Northern California Rising Star, Environmental Litigation and Environmental Law, 2014-2019
- Order of the Coif
- Traynor Honor Society
- Phi Kappa Phi
- Associate Articles Editor, Global Business & Development Law Journal

Speaking Engagements / Events

- *Temporary Permits and Groundwater Storage Projects*, Co-presenter, Argent Communications 33rd Annual California Water Law & Policy Conference, June 11, 2018
- *Preparing for Sustainable Groundwater Management: Recharging Groundwater from a Water Rights Perspective*, Presenter, CalCIMA 2016 Education Conference, November 8, 2016
- *Conduct and Ethics Training for Water Agency Officials: A Primer on AB 1234*, Co-presenter, ACWA 2016 Spring Conference & Exhibition, May 5, 2016

Publications

- *President and Congress Approve \$1.3 Trillion Spending Bill including \$20 Billion for Water*, California Water Law & Policy Reporter, April 2018
- *Lawsuit Seeks to have California Waterways Identified as Hydrologically Impaired under the Clean Water Act*, California Water Law & Policy Reporter, December 20, 2017
- *Preparing for Sustainable Groundwater Management: A Review of Groundwater Recharge*, California Water Law & Policy, March 2017
- *A Compendium of California's Sustainable Groundwater Management Act*, Provided by Downey Brand's Water Law Practice, December 2016
- *California Governor Brown Approves Assembly Bill 2551, Which Broadens Public Contracting Options for Surface Water Storage Projects*, California Water Law & Policy Reporter, Vol. 27, No. 2, November 2016
- *Still Waiting for a Federal Response to the Drought: A Legislative Update*, California Water Law & Policy Reporter, May 2016
- *Does Every Drop Really Count? An inconsistent Accounting of California's Water Supply*, California Water Law & Policy Reporter, Vol. 26, No. 3, December 2015
- *Union of Concerned Scientists Proposes Best Practices to Achieve Goals of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act*, California Water Law & Policy Reporter, Vol. 26, No. 2, November 2015
- *The Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan: An Impossible Task?*, Environmental Law News, Vol. 24, No. 2, November 2015

- *A Federal Response to the Drought – Three Bills Pending in Congress*, California Water Law & Policy Reporter, Vol. 25, No. 11, August/September 2015
- *Environmental Groups File Suit Against San Francisco Challenging Hetch Hetchy Reservoir*, California Water Law & Policy Reporter, Vol. 25, No. 9, June 2015
- *U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Finds No Significant Impact for Trap and Haul Operation in Conjunction with San Joaquin River Settlement Agreement*, California Water Law & Policy Reporter, Vol. 25, No. 7, April 2015
- *State Water Resources Control Board Partially Approves Temporary Changes to the State Water Project and Central Valley Project Water Rights Permits*, California Water Law & Policy Reporter, Vol. 25, No. 6, March 2015
- *Ninth Circuit Upholds Biological Opinion Regarding Impacts of Central Valley Project and State Water Project Operations on Salmonid Species*, California Water Law & Policy Reporter, Vol. 25, No. 5, February 2015

Legal Alerts

- *AB 2257: New Brown Act Requirements for Meeting Agendas on Local Agency Websites Effective for Meetings Held on and after January 1, 2019*, September 13, 2018
- *Client Invoices Reside in the “Heartland” of Attorney-Client Privilege While Matters Are Ongoing . . . But Maybe Not Later*, January 5, 2017
- *No End In Sight for California’s Drought– Governor Imposes Statewide Water Restrictions*, April 2, 2015