



Sophia B. Castillo Partner

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Practice Areas

Appellate & Writ Practice | CEQA / NEPA | Environmental Enforcement
Defense | Environmental Remediation & Due Diligence |
Environmental/Toxics Litigation | Food & Agriculture Litigation | Land Use |
Pipelines & Terminals | Proposition 65 | Real Property & Land Use
Litigation | Water Quality Law | Water Rights Litigation

Sophia Castillo (formerly Belloli) is an environmental lawyer that helps her clients comply with, and litigate, complex issues relating to California's Proposition 65, toxics and contaminated sites, and water quality laws.

She specializes in developing risk management and risk avoidance strategies and in crafting regulatory compliance programs that are in line with those risk goals. She prides herself on her excellent client relationships and helping her clients develop practical, common-sense, and creative solutions to their most difficult environmental and regulatory problems.

Sophie's clients include numerous consumer goods manufacturers, food industry clients, industrial facilities, oil and gas companies, and public agencies. She defends complex, multi-party CERCLA/contaminated property cases and has expertise in natural resource damages claims, natural resource damage assessments, and oil spill response. She frequently represents clients in environmental lawsuits filed by citizen plaintiffs in her Clean Water Act and Proposition 65 practices and has litigated and resolved favorably for her clients numerous Clean Water Act and Proposition 65 citizen suits. She counsels clients on environmental transactional issues related to water and waste compliance and release reporting under California and federal law.

Sophie has been an active Proposition 65 defense attorney for many years, representing consumer goods manufacturer clients in the food, cosmetics, home and garden, housewares, hardware, glassware, and cleaning products industries in litigation, negotiations, and in building and implementing compliance programs. Sophie has a particular interest in and passion for Proposition 65 as it relates to the food industry and counsels national brands, private labels, and institutional suppliers and family-owned food processing businesses. She is well versed in the nuances of exposure analyses that shape Proposition 65 compliance decision making in the regulated community.

Experience

Proposition 65 Counseling & Litigation Defense

- Represented product manufacturers and retailers in defending and settling numerous Proposition 65 matters, both at the pre-litigation notice phase and in litigation, in the following industries: cosmetics, food and beverage, lead hardware, power tools, notebooks, sports equipment, glassware, and cleaning products.
- Advised clients on Prop. 65 compliance programs and supply chain management issues resulting from Proposition 65 compliance decisions.
- Advised clients on indemnity concerns and supply chain communications following Proposition 65 compliance programs and litigation claims.

Clean Water Act Citizen Suit Litigation

- Represented city in Clean Water Act citizen suit, alleging sanitary sewer overflows. Settled case favorably for our client prior to trial and expensive expert discovery.
- Represented scrap metal recycling facility in Clean Water Act citizen suit, alleging violations of the State of California's General Industrial Storm Water Permit. Settled case favorably for our client prior to formal litigation.
- Represented industrial compressed gas facility in Clean Water Act citizen suit, alleging violations of the State of California's General Industrial Storm Water Permit. The Plaintiff dismissed the case in its entirety during motion practice in the litigation.
- Represented marine shipping terminal in Clean Water Act citizen suit alleging violations of the State of California's General Industrial Storm Water Permit. Settled case favorably for client following successful Motion for Summary Judgment, discovery motions and expert discovery.

Contaminated Property Litigation

- Litigated multiple CERCLA/superfund contaminated property cases at former dry cleaning sites and managed settlement and mediation efforts for cost recovery issues.
- Defended three state court coordinated actions with ten plaintiffs asserting CERCLA and state law personal injury claims arising from alleged vapor intrusion from alleged soil/ground water contamination at former dry cleaning site.

Water Rights/Supply Projects & Litigation

- Prosecuted, through trial, a complex water right dispute between three public agencies.
- Assisted in representation of developer in litigation relating to purchase and sale of water rights in Southern California.
- Settled a dispute relating to water system capital maintenance costs between two public agencies on the cusp of arbitration.
- Counseled water district client in large water transfer/purchase and wheeling project through the Delta and through multiple public water district facilities, which included multiple contracts between multiple agencies as well as associated environmental review.

Land Use Projects & Litigation

- Assisted developer with CEQA historic resource analysis, issues and advocacy before local public agency.
- Represented public agency in CEQA historic resource writ matter.
- Represented multiple cities and counties in CEQA and local land use writ matters brought by citizen groups.

Professional & Community Service

- Bar Association of San Francisco, Environmental Law Section
- Ad-Hoc Industry Resource Management Group
- Association of California Water Agencies, Water Quality Committee
- California Stormwater Quality Association
- Central Valley Clean Water Association
- California Association of Sanitation Agencies
- Association of Women in Water, Energy and the Environment
- San Francisco Bay Planning Coalition

Education

- J.D., University of California, Hastings College of the Law, 2005
- B.A., *cum laude*, University of California at Los Angeles, 2002
- Study Abroad, Lund University, Lund, Sweden, 2000

Honors & Rankings

- U.C. Hastings Pro Bono Attorney Honor Roll, U. C. Hastings Center for Gender and Refugee Studies, 2012
- Articles Editor, *Hastings Law Journal*, 2004-05
- U.C. Hastings Moot Court Team, Roger Traynor Appellate Moot Court Competition, Second Place – Best Oral Argument, 2004

Speaking Engagements / Events

- *Policy Spotlight: Key Issues for Your Specialty Food Business*, Co-presenter, Specialty Food Association, Winter Fancy Food Show, January 19, 2020
- *Legal and Operational Viewpoints on Composting Operations: Wastewater and Air Concerns for Industry*, Speaker, 2019 Mapistry Pollution Prevention Summit, October 23-24, 2019
- *New Chemical Listings: How to Make Sure Your Company Stays Compliant*, Panelist, Prop 65

Clearinghouse Annual Conference, September 23, 2019

- *What To Know For The Next Wet Season And Beyond*, Presenter, Storm Water Awareness Week Webcasts, September 28-29, 2016
- *Bay Planning Coalition Expert Briefing*, Storm Water Management: The New Industrial & Municipal Regulations, May 27, 2015
- *Vapor Intrusion at a Former Dry Cleaning Site*, Association of Defense Counsel Annual Meeting, Toxic Tort Session, December 2013
- *Stormwater: What You Need to Know to Survive Winter*, Co-speaker, Hanson Bridgett Public Agency Roundtable, November 2013
- *Current Issues in Storm Water Regulation in California*, Presenter, Lorman Education Services Seminar, February 2013
- *Update on New California Water Law and Legislation*, Northern California County Counsel Meeting, July 2010

Publications

- *2019 A Creative Year for Proposition 65 Plaintiffs – Acrylamide in Ice Cream Cones, Cadmium and Lead in Seaweed, Furfuryl Alcohol in Hamburger Buns, and Chromium in Leather Work Gloves and Baby Powder*, California Proposition 65, January 2020
- *Practical Advice on Avoiding Prop. 65 Enforcement*, California Grocer, Issue 5, October 2016
- *New Prop. 65 Is A Relief for California Manufacturers*, Co-author, Law360, November 2013
- *Lead-Free Plumbing Regulations on the Horizon in 2010*, The Marin Lawyer, August 2009
- *State Board Freezes Enrollment in Statewide General Stormwater NPDES Permits for Construction and Industrial Permits Following Writ in City of Arcadia Case*, California Water Law & Policy, October 2008
- *Cooper Industries v. Aviall Services: Implications for the United States' Liability Under CERCLA*, 56 Hastings Law Journal 193 (2004) [cited in *Atlantic Research Corp. v. United States*, 459 F.3d 827 (8th Cir. 2006) (affirmed by *United States v. Atlantic Research Corp.*, 551 U.S. 128 (2007))], 2007

Legal Alerts

- *The Latest in the Prop. 65 World: Jury Trials; Inorganic Arsenic in Rice; and the FDA Weighs in on Coffee*, September 6, 2018
- *U.S. District Court Holds USEPA Must Regulate Previously Exempted Stormwater Runoff from Specified Commercial, Industrial, and Institutional Sources in Los Angeles*, August 31, 2018
- *New Proposition 65 Clear and Reasonable Warning Regulations Are Effective in 2018*, November 6, 2017
- *Proposition 65 Warning Required for Furfuryl Alcohol as of September 30, 2017*, October 5, 2017
- *DOJ Issues Policy Memo Limiting the Use of Supplemental Environmental Projects in Federal Settlements*, June 12, 2017

- *Water Board Adopts Revisions to Enforcement Policy That Are Expected to Generally Increase Penalties*, April 4, 2017
- *New Proposed Proposition 65 Regulations Equal Less Help and More Hurt (and Litigation) for Industry*, January 21, 2015