

ASSOCIATE

Samuel Johnson

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Samuel Johnson is an associate in Best Best & Krieger LLP's (BBK) Environmental and Natural Resources Law practice group and serves as Assistant General Counsel to the Rowland Water District and the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District. Samuel advises California cities and special districts on the full range of public agency legal issues that arise in day-to-day operations and governance—supporting boards and management on Brown Act and ethics compliance, Public Records Act requests and transparency issues, contract negotiation and drafting, and risk management. He also provides AB 1234 ethics training for public officials, helping agencies reduce risk through proactive compliance.

Samuel's environmental and water practice includes a broad range of water rights and water-quality matters. He has developed a successful litigation practice across numerous environmental and natural resources issues, including groundwater adjudications and disputes arising under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), the Clean Water Act, and the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act. In 2025, Samuel successfully briefed and won a Ninth Circuit appeal involving the intersection of civil-rights issues and land use.

Samuel earned his B.S. in Environmental Economics from the University of Michigan's School for Environment and Sustainability and served as Vice President of Southwestern's Environmental Law Society. He began his water-quality work during his clerkship with the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, analyzing state and federal regulatory developments concerning emerging contaminants.

Outside of work, Samuel enjoys birdwatching with his kids, playing basketball, and watching Big Ten sports.

Accolades

- Moot Court, 2023 ABA National Appellate Advocacy Competition
Regional Best Brief Award

CORE PRACTICES

Environmental Law & Natural Resources

Water

Municipal Law

Government Affairs

EDUCATION & ADMISSIONS

Education

Southwestern Law School, J.D.

University of Michigan, B.S., environmental economics

Bar Admissions

California

Court Admissions

U.S. District Court, Central District of California

Thought Leadership

Publications

- “California State Water Resources Control Board Issues New and Revised PFAS Advisory Levels,” *PublicCEO*, Nov. 10, 2025
- “New Regulations to Cement Conservation as a 'California Way of Life'," *Daily Journal*, Aug. 22, 2024
- “Relatively(im)permanent: The ever-changing scope of the Clean Water Act,” ABA's Trends, January 2024
- “The Fifth Circuit Tosses Corps' Derelict Environmental Assessment,” California Water Law Reporter, January 2024