

PARTNER

Alisha M. Winterswyk

She/Her

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Alisha Winterswyk's practice centers on advising public and private clients on an array of state and federal environmental laws, with a specific focus on the California Environmental Quality Act and the National Environmental Policy Act. A partner in the Best Best & Krieger LLP's Environmental Law & Natural Resources practice group, Alisha regularly counsels clients on the substantive and procedural mandates of CEQA/NEPA. When her clients face legal challenges to their decisions or projects, Alisha successfully and zealously defends those clients in court. Throughout her career, Alisha has reviewed and/or drafted hundreds of CEQA-related documents.

A trusted land use advisor, Alisha is regularly called upon to assist public and private clients with navigating the land entitlement process. In her land use practice, Alisha advises public and private clients on complex land use matters involving the Planning and Zoning Law, the Subdivision Map Act, the California Coastal Act, the State Mining and Reclamation Act, the Cortese-Knox Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act, the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act, and other related laws. With an eye toward environmentally responsible development, Alisha has advised public agency clients on myriad annexations, development agreements, general plan updates and amendments, specific plan adoption and amendments, coastal development permits, and various subdivisions. As a former assistant city attorney to several southern California cities, Alisha has extensive experience advising planning, engineering, and public works departments. She looks for practical approaches to solving difficult land use questions.

Alisha served as an adjunct law professor at Whittier Law School where she taught California environmental law. Alisha has guest lectured at several other Southern California universities on environmental and land use matters. Alisha frequently speaks on CEQA and land use issues at professional conferences, seminars and continuing legal education events. Over the past several years, she has contributed as a panelist to several AEP essential and advanced CEQA workshops. Each year Alisha coaches or advises a team of law students who participate in the California Lawyers Association's Annual Environmental Negotiations Competition. Alisha is an advisor and former secretary to the California Lawyers Association Environmental Law Section Executive Committee, and the past director and president of the Orange County Association of Environmental Professionals. She also serves on

CORE PRACTICES

- California Coastal Act
- California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)
- Environmental Law & Natural Resources
- Environmental Litigation
- Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO)
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- Municipal Law
- Special Districts

EDUCATION & ADMISSIONS

Education

- Whittier Law School, J.D., magna cum laude
- Whittier College, B.S.

Bar Admissions

- California

BBK's Culture & Community Committee.

While in law school, she served as the editor-in-chief of the *Whittier Law Review* and she was a member of the Moot Court Honors Board. Alisha was a judicial law clerk to the late Honorable Presiding Justice David G. Sills of the California Court of Appeal, Fourth District, Division Three. In her free time, Alisha enjoys being with her family, fishing, rock climbing, mountain biking, quilting, knitting and reading.

Accolades

- Wonderful Women, *Lawyers of Color*, 2023
- The Best Lawyers in America®, Land Use and Zoning Law, 2023 - 2026
- The Best Lawyers in America®, Municipal Law 2023–2025
- Lawdragon, 500 Leading Environmental Lawyers, 2025
- Latino Leader Worth Watching, *Profiles in Diversity Journal*, 2022
- *Southern California Super Lawyers Rising Stars*, Environmental, 2013-2015

Professional & Community Involvement

- State Bar of California Environmental Section Executive Committee
- Orange County Association of Environmental Professionals, chapter president

Thought Leadership

Publications

- "Specific Plan EIRs and Exemptions for Follow-On Actions," *BBKnowledge*, Feb. 19, 2014

Presentations

- "Riding the Exemption Wave: The Ins and Outs of Common CEQA Exemptions," Association of Environmental Professionals California State Conference, April 23, 2026
- "CEQA Trivia," Planning Officials Forum, Shaping Orange County's Next Chapter: Housing, Sustainability and Streamlining, Feb. 13, 2025
- "CEQA Trivia," American Planning Association California Conference, Sept. 29, 2024
- "VMT Analysis - Off the Test Track and On the Road," Association of Environmental Professionals State Conference, March 26, 2024
- "Planning, Zoning, and Development Law Update," University of California, Los Angeles Extension Annual Land Use Law & Planning Conference, Feb. 2, 2024
- "How to Write an EIR: A Webinar," Association of Environmental Professionals Webinar, Aug. 17, 2023
- "Planning, Zoning and Development Law Update" and "Quick Hits: 2023," UCLA Extension Public Policy Program's Annual Land Use Law and Planning Conference, Jan. 27, 2023
- "How to Write an EIR," California Association of Environmental Professionals Webinar, July 28, 2022
- "CEQA Mid-Year Update & Litigation Strategies," County Counsels' Association of California Spring Land Use Study Section Conference, May 5, 2022

- “CEQA Presentation,” Webinar, Southwestern Law School, Mar. 17, 2021
- “Planning, Zoning, and Development Law: What's New from California's Judicial and Legislative Branches?” and “Quick Hits: 2022,” UCLA Extension's Annual Land Use Law & Planning Conference, Jan. 21, 2022
- “Planning, Zoning and Development Law: What's New from California's Judicial and Legislative Branches,” UCLA Extension Public Policy Program's 35th Annual Land Use Law & Planning Conference, Jan. 8, 2021
- “The California Environmental Quality Act Turns 50: Where Have We Been, Where Are We Heading - A Trip Down Memory Lane,” Argent Communications Group California Land Use & Policy Annual Conference, Nov. 20, 2020
- ““Get With the Program: How to Draft a Programmatic Analysis that is Specific Enough to Stand the Test of Time,” Association of Environmental Professionals Virtual Conference, Nov. 10, 2020
- “Who's in Charge: CEQA Conflicts and Cap-and-Trade,” Panel, Los Angeles County Bar Association, Oct. 22, 2020
- “Advanced CEQA Workshop,” Workshop, Association of Environmental Professionals – Orange County, Mar. 6, 2020
- “Planning, Zoning, and Development Law: What's New from California's Judicial and Legislative Branches?” and “Quick Hits,” UCLA Extension Public Policy Program's 34th Annual Land Use Law & Planning Conference, Jan. 24, 2020
- Co-Chair, UCLA Extension Public Policy Program's 33rd Annual Land Use Law and Planning Conference, Jan. 18, 2019
- “The Great Debate: Can Housing in California be Affordable and Environmentally Conscious?” American Planning Association California Conference, Oct. 7, 2018
- “Great! We've Been Served! Now What? How Do You As an Agency/Consultant Survive a CEQA Lawsuit,” Association of Environmental Professional's State Conference, Mar. 27, 2018
- “Update: Planning, Zoning, and Development Law – A Heapin' Helping of Housing, and So Much More,” Land Use Law and Planning Conference Program, Jan. 19, 2018
- “Findings: How to Bridge the Analytic Gap Between Raw Evidence and the Decision,” Association of Environmental Professionals' California State Conference, May 20, 2017
- “Advanced CEQA Workshop,” Workshop, Association of Environmental Professionals, Mar. 3, 2017
- “Planning, Zoning, and Development Law Update,” UCLA Extension's 31st Annual Land Use Law & Planning Conference, Jan. 27, 2017
- “The Interplay between the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA),” Law Seminars International SGMA, GSA Setup & GSP Preparation Conference, Jan. 9, 2017
- “Sustainable Groundwater Management Act 2.0: 2 Years To 2020/2022,” State Bar of California, Environmental Law Section Webinar, Nov. 17, 2016
- “Southern Sierra Tree Die-Off,” State Bar of California Environmental Law Section's Environmental Law Conference, Oct. 22, 2016
- “Complying with CEQA, Brown Act, and Other Public Noticing Requirements,” League of California Cities' Annual Conference, Oct. 6, 2016
- “CEQA and Noticing - Best Practices for Complying with CEQA, Brown Act and other Public Noticing Requirements,” Association of Environmental Professionals' Annual Conference, Apr. 4, 2016