

PARTNER

Charity B. Schiller

She/Her

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📍 Riverside



Charity Schiller helps public and private clients negotiate the maze of laws that apply to infrastructure and private development projects, so that those projects can be entitled and built. Specifically, Charity assists clients with all aspects of the California Environmental Quality Act, the National Environmental Policy Act and related environmental laws. She has extensive experience with the preparation and adoption of environmental impact reports, environmental impact statements, negative declarations, addenda, exemptions and other environmental documents. Charity is also an experienced litigator, successfully defending her clients before administrative boards and trial and appellate courts throughout California. In addition, Charity serves on Best Best & Krieger LLP's Executive Committee.

Site-Specific Entitlements

Charity represents a wide array of private developer clients and assisted with the successful entitlement of many dozens of projects across California. She helped developers obtain approvals of numerous specific plans, securing development rights to thousands of acres of land. She assisted with acquiring land use approvals and entitlements for dozens of residential, commercial, mixed-use and warehouse projects across the state. She also assists several renewable energy developers with solar, wind, biogas and geothermal project siting and CEQA review. Charity successfully defended many of these projects from CEQA and land use litigation in both the trial and appellate courts, including negotiating complex multi-party settlements that resulted in the immediate dismissal of litigation while sparing her clients from litigation costs, time delays and business uncertainties.

Transportation/Linear Projects

Charity assists clients with the successful entitlement and construction of billions of dollars of transportation infrastructure, including commuter rail, freeway widening, car-pool lane additions and new highway projects. In that role, she regularly helps her clients work with federal and state transportation agencies to prepare joint CEQA/NEPA documents, secure funding for transportation projects and defend project approvals from litigation. Charity also assisted several federally designated metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) and regional transportation agencies with countywide and regional transportation plans and the adoption of Sustainable Communities Strategies under SB 375. Similarly, Charity has extensive experience with the unique permitting and CEQA issues

CORE PRACTICES

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

Environmental Law & Natural Resources

Environmental Litigation

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

Special Districts

Water

Municipal Law

posed by linear projects that span multiple jurisdictions. Charity used those skills to secure – and defend – approvals for transmission lines, pipelines, water transfer projects and other infrastructure projects.

Land Use Plans/Climate Action Plans

Charity assists the firm's many municipal clients with CEQA review and adoption of their general plans, several of which have received awards for sustainability and innovation excellence. Similarly, Charity assisted several jurisdictions with CEQA review and adoption of climate action plans designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions on a jurisdiction-wide level.

Beyond her work for clients, Charity regularly teaches courses in environmental law at the University of California, Riverside and guest lectures at several other Southern California universities. She also frequently authors articles on environmental law and speaks on CEQA and related issues. Charity is admitted to practice in the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California and Southern District of California.

Accolades

- *The Best Lawyers in America*®, Environmental Law, 2025, 2026
- Lawdragon, 500 Leading Environmental Lawyers, 2025
- The Lawdragon Green 500: Leaders in Environmental Law, 2024
- Woman Worth Watching, *Profiles in Diversity Journal*, 2018
- Woman of Distinction Award for the 61st Assembly District, 2015
- *Southern California Super Lawyers Rising Stars*, Environmental, 2013-2014

Professional & Community Involvement

- Leo A. Deegan Inn of Court
- Riverside County Philharmonic, board member
- Riverside Downtown Partnership, board member
- Riverside Public Library Foundation, board member
- Leadership Riverside Program, Steering Committee member

Thought Leadership

Publications

- "2025 Women in Law," *Attorney At Law Magazine*, May 2025 Issue
- "Newly Proposed CEQA Guidelines Are Coming to Your Town," *Western City*, Aug. 1, 2018
- "Life After Paris: Global Change at a Local Level," *BBKnowledge*, June 29, 2017
- "Comments Sought on Draft Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan," *BBKnowledge*, Dec. 9, 2014

EDUCATION & ADMISSIONS

Education

Pepperdine University School of Law,
J.D., with honors

University of California, Riverside,
M.S., biochemistry and molecular
biology

University of Oregon, B.S.,
biochemistry

Bar Admissions

California

Oregon

- “Decision: Voter-Sponsored Local Land Use Initiatives Not Subject to Environmental Review,” *BBKnowledge*, Aug. 11, 2014
- “[Video] Senate Bill 375 and Sustainable Communities Strategies,” *BBKnowledge*, March 3, 2014
- “BBK’s Charity Schiller Discusses CEQA Baseline (Video),” *BBKnowledge*, Jan. 23, 2014
- “Resurrecting the Departed: Legal Implications of Reintroducing Revived Species,” JD Supra, Jan. 23, 2014
- “[Video] CEQA Baseline,” *BBKnowledge*, Jan. 15, 2014
- “Office of Planning and Research Seeks Input on Proposed Changes to State CEQA Guidelines,” JD Supra, Jan. 6, 2014
- “California Department of Fish and Wildlife Increases CEQA Document Filing Fees,” *BB&K Legal Alert*, Dec.10, 2013
- “Court of Appeal Rules on Lead Agencies’ Ability to Delegate CEQA Decision-Making Authority,” *BBK Legal Alert*, Nov., 2013
- “Senate Bill 375: Implementing a Framework for Greenhouse Gas Reduction,” 16.2 A.B.A. *Climate Change, Sustainable Development, & Ecosystems Committee Newsletter*, October 2013
- “Court of Appeal Addresses Greenhouse Gas Emissions Analysis Under CEQA,” *BBK Legal Alert*, Aug. 20, 2013
- “State Supreme Court Makes Key CEQA Ruling Involving Baseling Analyses,” *BBK Legal Alert*, Aug. 5, 2013
- “Court Finds Public Interest in Meeting Renewable Energy Goals in California Outweighs Efforts to Preserve Agricultural Lands,” *BBK Legal Alert*, June 27, 2013
- “Local Legislative Bodies Must Expressly Agendize CEQA Documents – County Planning Commission Failed to Include Project-Related...” *BBK Legal Alert*, June 5, 2013

Presentations

- “Banking on Less Traffic: New Strategies for VMT Mitigation,” California Association of Councils of Governments Regional Leadership Forum, March 7, 2025
- “CEQA Overview,” University of California, Los Angeles Extension Annual Land Use Law & Planning Conference, Feb. 2, 2024
- “SB 743 Implementation,” San Joaquin Valley Regional Planning Agencies 15th Annual San Joaquin Valley Policy Conference, May 12, 2022
- “The Impact of SB743, Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT) and Environmental Mitigation: What does it mean for your City,” San Bernardino County Transportation Authority City County Conference, Apr. 7, 2022
- “Responding to Public Records Act Requests: Documents, E-mails, Electronic Records and Exemptions,” Land Use Spring 2021 Study Section Meeting, County Counsels' Association of California, May 21, 2021
- “Preparing for a Post VMT World Apocalypse,” Association of Environmental Professionals Virtual Conference, , Nov. 9, 2020
- “Do We have a Transportation No Man's Land? What to Make of Citizens for Positive Growth for Projects Approved During the Transition from LOS to VMT,” 16th Annual Advanced Virtual Seminar, Law Seminars International CEQA, Sept. 21, 2020
- “CEQA 201: Beyond the Basics,” Virtual Workshop, California Special Districts Association, July 29, 2020
- “CEQA 101: A Step-by-Step Approach,” Virtual Workshop, California Special Districts Association, July 28, 2020
- “Deciphering SB 743 - Basics and Perspectives,” Advancing Women in Transportation - Inland Empire, April 29, 2020
- “Advanced CEQA Workshop,” Association of Environmental Professionals Workshop – Inland, March 4, 2020
- “CEQA 101 & 201: Basics and Beyond,” Workshop, California Special Districts Association, Feb. 6, 2020 and July 28, 2020

- “CEQA 101 & 201: Basics and Beyond,” Workshop, California Special Districts Association, Feb. 6, 2020
- “Senate Bill (SB) 743,” Breakout Session, 2019 Fresno Regional Transportation Innovations Summit, Oct. 23, 2019
- “Newly Proposed CEQA Guidelines Are Coming to Your Town!” League of California Cities Annual Conference and Expo, Sep. 13, 2018
- “Update on the California Environmental Quality Act: What’s New for 2018,” BBK What’s New in Environmental and Special Districts Law Webinar Series, March 6, 2018
- “Do You Have a Commitment Problem: When is CEQA Compliance Required During the Public Works Process?” Association of Environmental Professionals’ State Conference, March 26, 2018
- “A Roadmap for GHG and Climate Analysis: Incorporating California’s New Scoping Plan and SB 32 Requirements in Local Planning,” American Planning Association, California Chapter Conference, Sep. 23, 2017
- “CEQA Attorney’s Perspective,” Institute of Transportation Engineers and Association of Environmental Professionals SB 743 Workshop, June 21, 2017
- “Lost in Translation: Addressing Communication Challenges Amongst CEQA Consultants, Developers, Public Agencies, and Attorneys,” Association of Environmental Professionals’ California State Conference, May 20, 2017
- “Into the Vortex: The Ever Expanding Reach of the CEQA Administrative Record,” Association of Environmental Professionals’ California State Conference, May 19, 2017
- “Living the Good Life: The Intersection of Land Use, Climate Change, and Toxic Air Contaminants,” The State Bar of California Environmental Law Section’s Environmental Conference, May 5, 2017
- Presenter, Association of Environmental Professionals Advanced CEQA Workshop, Feb. 28, 2017
- “CEQA and Sustainable Community Strategies - Making Sense of SB 375,” Argent Communications California Land Use Law & Policy Conference, Sep. 12, 2016
- “Implications of the State Supreme Court’s Newhall Ranch Decision on GHG Emissions Analysis,” Association of Environmental Professionals’ Western Inland Empire Luncheon Series, Feb. 18, 2016
- “The California Environmental Quality Act: Practical Pointers for Planners and Practitioners,” American Planning Association, California Chapter Inland Empire Section’s Law and Ethics for Planners Event, Nov. 19, 2015
- “CEQA Compliance Timing: Judicial Treatment of Pre-Commitment Since Save Tara,” California State Bar Conference, Oct. 9, 2015
- “Where’s the Line?: Ethical Tensions Between Public Disclosure, Our Ethical Duties as Lawyers, and Constitutional Rights,” State Bar of California Environmental Law Section Webinar, May 19, 2015
- “CEQA 101,” University of California, Riverside Extension, April 10-11, 2015
- “Governor’s Drought Proclamations, CEQA Exemptions and Drought Planning,” Association of Environmental Professionals Conference, March 21, 2015
- “Life in the Country — Not Letting Climate Change Law Compliance Serve as a Barrier to Growth,” Argent Communications Group Conference, March 9, 2015
- “Ruby Ridge Ethical Considerations,” Riverside Inn of Court, Jan. 28, 2015
- “Environmental Ethics,” CLE Water Conference, Nov. 3-4, 2014
- “Urban Density, Transit, Water/Energy Conservation and Distributed Energy,” Greenhouse Gas Regulations Conference, Oct. 6-7, 2014
- “California’s Drought: An Update on Current Water Supply Reliability Issues and their Legal Implications,” Los Angeles County Bar Association, June 19, 2014
- “Ethical Considerations for Environmental Practitioners,” California Institute of Water Law, June 12, 2014
- “Bay-Delta and Water Supply Issues: The Latest,” Association of Environmental Professionals Annual Conference, March 24, 2014

- “Preparing CEQA Administrative Records; What to Keep and What to Throw Away,” Association of Environmental Professionals Annual Conference, March 24, 2014
- “Recent Developments Affecting the California Environmental Quality Act,” International Right of Way Association, March 5, 2014