

OF COUNSEL

Brian Hughes

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📍 Sacramento / Houston



Brian Hughes is Of Counsel in Best Best & Krieger LLP's Special Districts Practice Group. Brian's practice involves advocating for, counseling, assisting, and above all providing thorough legal guidance to special districts, public agencies, and other municipalities throughout California. He specializes in General Counsel Practice, Public Cemetery Districts, Water District Law, Agency Operations, Public Management of Natural Resources and Parks, Infrastructure and Utilities, Public Recreation Agencies, General Land Use, and California Mining Law / Vested Rights.

Brian is highly dedicated to all of his clients, regardless of their size, scope, location, or issue. As general counsel, Brian serves to represent, protect, and improve each district through educated and cost-effective legal advice, an involved operational understanding, consistent communications, empathy, and a love of working for public service.

Public Land Use Practice

Brian's work pertaining to land use spans the gamut of land management and includes recreation, environmental mitigation, water rights, public resource management, wildlife restoration, park management, infrastructure and utility improvements or buildouts, historical preservation, emergency services, mining oil and gas development, public-private partnerships, and historical mining or reoperations of mining or logging.

Public Cemetery District Practice

Brian is honored to represent, as general counsel, a diverse number of public cemetery districts across California and assists them in all of their needs including daily operational issues, public contracts, public debt financing, district expansions, employment issues, historical burial issues, and board meeting oversight. He is an active member of the public cemetery district associations in California and regularly speaks at their conferences.

Brown Act, Public Records Act, and Conflicts of Interest

In addition to regularly representing his and the firm's clients at their public meetings, he frequently trains them on the Public Records Act, the Brown Act, conflicts of interest, and AB 1234 ethics compliance.

CORE PRACTICES

Special Districts

Municipal Law

Water

Eminent Domain

Environmental Law & Natural Resources

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

EDUCATION & ADMISSIONS

Education

The University of Tulsa College of Law, J.D.

Temple University, M.S., geology

Franklin & Marshall College, B.A., geoscience

Bar Admissions

California

Oklahoma

Prior to Best Best & Krieger LLP

A hydrogeologist by training, Brian comes from the U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of the Solicitor, where he was an attorney-advisor with the Bureau of Reclamation for the California-Great Basin Region. He handled legal matters involving water rights, facility operations, maintenance and replacement, new construction projects (including dams and canal reconstruction), environmental impact statement reviews and FOIA requests.

Thought Leadership

Presentations

- "Life, Death, and How Cemetery Districts Become Community Focal Points," American Planning Association California Conference, Sept. 30, 2025
- "Reclaiming of Unused Plots" and "Policy Writing," Public Cemetery Alliance Annual Conference, Aug. 1, 2025
- "Brown Act" and "Public Records Act," Public Cemetery Alliance Rolling Hills Casino Training Day, June 13, 2025
- "AB 1234 Ethics," Golden State Risk Management Authority & BBK Training Day, Apr. 30, 2025
- "Cemetery Finances - In or Out of the County" and "Brown Act," Public Cemetery Alliance Visalia Training Day, Apr. 9, 2025
- "Eligible Non-Residents Issues for Cemetery Districts," Public Cemetery Alliance 2024 Training Day Santa Cruz, June 10, 2024
- "Ask the Experts," Public Cemetery Alliance Annual Meeting, Aug. 2, 2024
- "SMARA and What Planners Need to Know About Mining and Reclamation Law in California" APA California 2024 Conference, September 30, 2024
- "Brown Act and Ethics for Small Special Districts" California Association of Resource Conservation Districts 2024 Annual Conference, December 12, 2024
- "The Brown Act: Overview and Changes," Golden State Risk Management Authority Monthly Webinar Series, January 22, 2025

Publications

- "Zoom for Board of Trustee Meetings in 2025," Public Cemetery Alliance Spring 2025 Newsletter
- "The Brown Act and the Right of Access: Can Employees Attend Board Meetings?" Public Cemetery Alliance Fall 2024 Newsletter
- "Cemetery Districts and Alternative Revenues" Public Cemetery Alliance Fall 2024 Newsletter