

OF COUNSEL

Gary M. Gold

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📍 Washington, D.C. / San Diego



Gary Gold is of counsel and a member of Best Best & Krieger LLP's (BBK) Environmental & Natural Resources practice group.

Gary is an attorney and engineer whose practice focuses on environmental and natural resources law, American Indian law, and federal administrative law and procedure. He represents public agencies and Tribal Nations in regulatory compliance matters involving the Endangered Species Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, Clean Water Act, and other federal laws affecting the use of water resources.

From the start of his career, Gary has successfully helped public agencies and Tribal Nations advance water infrastructure and conservation projects through complex legal and regulatory environments. He also has a record of success in reaching favorable outcomes in multiparty negotiations to settle water rights disputes.

Before joining BBK, Gary served as a senior executive on the leadership team at the U.S. Department of the Interior. In this role, he led the Bureau of Reclamation in multiparty water rights negotiations—in the Colorado River Basin and other basins throughout the west—and in advancing significant water infrastructure projects. Gary also advised the Commissioner of Reclamation and Secretary of the Interior on water rights matters.

Prior to his time at Interior, Gary served as a policy advisor to U.S. senators on both sides of the aisle and as a natural resources attorney for a major water and power provider in Arizona. Before practicing law, Gary served as a water resources engineer for a public water agency in Texas and conducted research funded by the National Science Foundation on the water-energy nexus.

Notable Experience

- Deputy Assistant Secretary for Water and Science, U.S. Department of the Interior
- Natural Resources Attorney, Salt River Project (Arizona)
- Policy Advisor to U.S. Senator Kyrsten Sinema
- Water Law Fellow, U.S. Senator Jeff Flake

CORE PRACTICES

Environmental Law & Natural Resources

Water Rights

Water Quality

Endangered Species

Public Infrastructure

Native American Law

EDUCATION & ADMISSIONS

Education

Arizona State University, Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law, J.D., summa cum laude

University of Texas at Austin, M.S., environmental and water resources engineering, summa cum laude

University of Arizona, WA Franke Honors College, B.S., civil engineering, summa cum laude

Bar Admissions

Arizona

California

- Water Resources Engineer, Austin Water Utility, Texas
- Research Fellow, National Science Foundation

Thought Leadership

Publications

- “An Antifragile Approach to Water Scarcity,” *The Water Report*, June 2025
- “What’s Changing in U.S. Water Policy? Key 2025 Updates to Environmental Rules,” *The Driller*, May 5, 2025
- “It’s not all zero-sum: Tribal water settlements can be a win-win solution in Arizona,” *The Arizona Republic*, Dec. 2020
- “The Energy-Water Nexus: An Analysis and Comparison of Various Configurations Integrating Desalination with Renewable Power,” *Resources Scientific Journal*, April 2015

Presentations

- “No Harm, No Foul: Services Propose Rescinding ‘Harm’ Definition in ESA Regulations,” National Water Resources Association D.C. Conference, May 2025
- “Tribal Water Rights and the Colorado River Basin,” University of Arizona Water Resources Research Center Seminar, Oct. 2024
- “A Bureau of Reclamation Perspective on Tribal Water Rights and the Colorado River Basin,” Secretary’s Indian Water Rights Office Team Chair Conference, Oct. 2024
- “Tribal Water Rights and the Colorado River Basin,” Arizona Water Law Conference by CLE International, Aug. 2024
- “Tribal Water Rights Settlements: a Nexus of Law, Policy, and Engineering,” University of Arizona Water Resources Research Center Seminar, May 2024
- “A U.S. Department of the Interior Perspective on Tribal Water Rights Settlements,” Arizona Water Law Conference by CLE International, Aug, 2023
- “Perspective from the U.S. Department of the Interior,” Association of California Water Agencies D.C. Conference, Feb. 2023
- “Federal Issues Forum,” Association of California Water Agencies Fall Conference, Nov. 2022 Association of California Water Agencies Spring Conference, Federal Affairs Committee, May 2022
- “Colorado River at a Crossroads,” California Lawyers Association Environmental Law Conference, Oct. 2022
- “Arizona Caucus Legislative Update,” Colorado River Water Users Association Annual Conference, Dec. 2019