

California Environmental Quality Act Compliance

A Practical Guidance® Practice Note by R. Tyson Sohagi and Albert I. Herson, Meyers Nave



R. Tyson Sohagi
Meyers Nave



Albert I. Herson
Meyers Nave

This practice note by R. Tyson Sohagi and Albert I. Herson covers the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) from both a compliance and litigation standpoint. Written for attorneys advising public agencies, developers, and project applicants, this practice note explains how CEQA shapes discretionary project approvals from the earliest planning decisions through administrative record preparation and judicial review. It demystifies when CEQA applies, how exemptions and streamlining tools can reduce delay, and why the choice between a Negative Declaration, Mitigated

Negative Declaration, or Environmental Impact Report can determine a project's legal risk. The authors offer practical guidance on building a defensible record, defining the project and environmental baseline, responding to public comments, crafting mitigation, and navigating recurring challenge points, such as transportation, greenhouse gas emissions, air quality, historical and tribal cultural resources, water supply, wildfire, housing, and infill development. The note also connects CEQA with NEPA, land use laws, the Brown Act, election law, and recent statutory reforms affecting housing and emergency rebuilding. For attorneys seeking to avoid procedural traps, anticipate opponents' arguments, and guide clients through one of California's most consequential environmental review statutes, this note provides a clear, practice-focused roadmap.

Click [here](#) for full access to this Practical Guidance® content.

R. Tyson Sohagi, Principal, Meyers Nave

Tyson Sohagi is a Principal in Meyers Nave's Land Use and Environmental Law practice group. He is distinguished among the land use and environmental community for his ability to address the nuanced intersection of legal, technical, and policy challenges. With a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering from UC Berkeley, Tyson offers a multidisciplinary perspective, synthesizing complex technical data and legal principles to deliver strategic solutions to private developers and public agencies alike. His work focuses on the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), planning law, housing, the Coastal Act, the Public Trust Doctrine, and Election Law.

Tyson serves as a trusted advisor on large-scale infrastructure projects, mixed-use developments, renewable energy/storage facilities, port and airport expansions, and long-term planning such as General Plans, Specific Plans, and Local Coastal Programs. He excels in navigating the multifaceted technical considerations these projects entail, from air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, transportation, hydrology, hazardous materials, noise, cultural resources, and geological resources. His ability to anticipate challenges and craft innovative strategies ensures the successful execution of ambitious projects that align with regulatory and environmental priorities.

Beyond his legal practice, Tyson is a leader who actively contributes to shaping California's legal and policy landscape. His work with the League of California Cities and the California State Association of Counties includes authoring amicus briefs for the California Supreme Court and Court of Appeal. Tyson's strategic vision and intellectual rigor make him an indispensable partner for clients navigating California's most complex and impactful projects.

Albert I. Herson, Senior Of Counsel, Meyers Nave

Albert (Al) Herson is a Senior Of Counsel in the Meyers Nave Land Use and Environmental Practice Group. Al is an environmental attorney and planner with over 40 years of experience. A recognized authority on the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and natural resources law, he provides counsel to public agencies on complex environmental and land use legal matters.

Al has prepared and reviewed hundreds of CEQA documents on land use and other government agency projects, both as an attorney and as a consultant prior to joining the firm. These include Environmental Impact Reports (EIRs) prepared for large-scale water projects, Regional Transportation Plans, General Plans, Climate Action Plans, and large-scale land use and transportation projects. Al provides in-depth guidance and reviews on priority topics such as land use, climate change, transportation, and air quality impact analysis. On many of his projects, he also reviews regional and local plans for compliance with Government Code requirements, and for compliance with state guidance such as the RTP Guidelines and the General Plan Guidelines.

Al served for 15 years as co-chair for CLE International's Annual CEQA Update conference, recognized as the state's leading CEQA legal conference. He has served on the Executive Committees of the State Bar and Sacramento County Environmental Law Sections. He is a Fellow of the American Institute of Certified Planners (FAICP) and a Past President of both the American Planning Association California Chapter and the California Planning Roundtable.

In addition to his extensive project experience and professional involvement with legal and planning associations, Al maintains ongoing publishing and teaching roles, which require him to stay informed on the latest judicial, legislative, and regulatory developments in planning and environmental law—knowledge he regularly shares with clients.

This document from Practical Guidance®, a comprehensive resource providing insight from leading practitioners, is reproduced with the permission of LexisNexis®. Practical Guidance includes coverage of the topics critical to practicing attorneys. For more information or to sign up for a free trial, visit [lexisnexis.com/practical-guidance](https://www.lexisnexis.com/practical-guidance). Reproduction of this material, in any form, is specifically prohibited without written consent from LexisNexis.