

KRISTOF D. SZOKE

SENIOR ASSOCIATE

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LANGUAGES:
English



Kristof Szoke is a highly skilled senior litigation Associate with comprehensive trial experience.

Kristof Szoke is a Senior Associate in the Trial and Litigation, and Eminent Domain and Inverse Condemnation Practice Groups.

Kristof represents clients in high-stakes litigation matters in state and federal courts. His experience includes second-chairing trials—including a recent case on behalf of L.A. Metro that resulted in an overwhelmingly favorable civil jury verdict—as well as advocating on behalf of clients in mediation. Kristof manages all phases of litigation, including presenting oral argument, conducting and defending depositions, overseeing discovery, and preparing both experts and fact witnesses to testify.

In the area of eminent domain law, Kristof has represented public entities in connection with massive public improvement projects including the City of Inglewood's NFL Stadium/Hollywood Park project, L.A. Metro's Westside Purple Line extension project, the City of South San Francisco's Civic Campus Center project, and the City of Modesto's SR99/Pelandale Ave. interchange reconstruction project.

Kristof also writes about evolving issues facing public entities, including the phenomenon of "First Amendment auditors" who routinely videotape and potentially disrupt municipal employees in their day-to-day work. His publications include papers provided at conferences by the International Municipal Lawyers Association and the League of California Cities, as well as articles in Los Angeles Lawyer magazine.

Kristof started his career working in the New York office of a large international law firm where he gained experience litigating complex commercial cases, handling intellectual property matters (trademarks, copyright, and trade secrets), and resolving disputes during bankruptcy proceedings.

EDUCATION

Washington University School of Law, JD, *cum laude*, 2017

University of California, Los Angeles, BA, 2012

ADMISSIONS

California, 2017 – Bar No. 331561

U.S. District Court, Central District of California

U.S. District Court, Eastern District of California

U.S. District Court, Southern District of California

U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit

PRACTICE AREAS

Trial & Litigation

Commercial Litigation

Crisis Management

Energy, Utilities & Renewables

Eminent Domain & Inverse

HONORS & AWARDS

- CALI Awards: Criminal Law & Procedure; Legal Ethics

Condemnation

First Amendment

Writs & Appeals

PRESENTATIONS & PUBLICATIONS

- Author, *First Amendment Audits*, *Los Angeles Lawyer* (July/August 2023)
- Presenter, *First Amendment Audit: Preparedness 101*, California State Association of Counties (CSAC), the League of California Cities (Cal Cities) and the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC) (July 29, 2022)
- Author, *Legal Privilege Pitfalls and Perils in Bankruptcy*, *New York Law Journal*, Vol. 260-No.59 (September 24, 2018)

REPRESENTATIVE EXPERIENCE

- ***San Diego Gas & Electric Company v. City of San Diego***. Kristof represented the City of San Diego in a lawsuit with SDG&E over which party had the legal responsibility to pay approximately \$100,000,000 for SDG&E to relocate certain electric and gas facilities located within City streets. The relocation of SDG&E's facilities was necessary to accommodate new pipelines for a City project converting wastewater to potable water. The trial court ruled in SDG&E's favor, granting SDG&E's motion for summary judgment, and denying the City's motion for summary judgment. Meyers Nave was retained by the City to appeal the trial court's ruling. Kristof was an essential member of the team that successfully persuaded the appellate court to reverse the trial court's ruling in full, and to enter judgment in favor of the City.
- ***Beverly Hills Unified School District v. Los Angeles California Metropolitan Transportation Authority***. Kristof second-chaired and secured an overwhelming verdict in favor of the Los Angeles California Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) in a high-stakes eminent domain trial involving an easement located 100 feet beneath the Beverly Hills High School necessary for Metro's multibillion dollar expansion of the D Line (formerly Purple Line).
- **County of Santa Barbara – Billion Dollar Victory in Thomas Fire and Montecito Debris Flow**. In one of the largest coordinated wildfire litigations in California history, Kristof was a member of the team that represented the County of Santa Barbara in complex proceedings against Southern California Edison arising from the 2017 Thomas Fire and Montecito debris flow. Edison, having paid over \$1.1 billion in settlements to more than 5,000 homeowners, sought to shift liability onto five public entities, including the County, via a Master Cross Complaint alleging negligence. In a first-of-its-kind attempt to offload wildfire liability, Edison demanded indemnification while concealing settlement evidence and pursuing a closed-door trial. Kristof helped secured decisive victories: a \$700 million damages exclusion in November 2023,

followed by a \$300+ million exclusion in April 2024, effectively eliminating over \$1 billion in claims. These rulings mark a watershed moment in public entity wildfire defense.

- ***Amato et al. v. BitMEX***. Kristof helped resolve securities litigation case where angel investors of a cryptocurrency exchange were unlawfully denied equity, ultimately recovering 30 million dollars on an original investment of 55k.
- ***AT&T Mobility v. City of Los Altos; Verizon Wireless v. City of Los Altos***. Kristof helped obtain a ruling dismissing a case against multiple large telecommunications carriers.