

MARGARET MOORE SOHAGI

PRINCIPAL

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LANGUAGES:
English



Margaret Sohagi is a legal pioneer driving California's biggest and greenest developments.

Margaret Moore Sohagi is a trailblazer in California land use and environmental law, with nearly 40 years of experience. A leading authority on CEQA, climate change, and renewable energy, she helps clients develop major infrastructure projects and advance sustainability initiatives statewide.

As a former city planner, Margaret is widely recognized for her pragmatic and results-driven legal strategies, working closely with in-house counsel, government staff, and elected officials on groundbreaking projects throughout California. As circumstances demand, she zealously defends land use and environmental approvals in court, often achieving favorable resolutions through mediation.

For nearly two decades before she joined the firm, Margaret was Managing Partner of a women-owned law firm serving government clients throughout California in complex project development and environmental review. She has advised the San Diego Association of Governments on its regional transportation plans since the late 1980s, and she now advises Imperial County on the Lithium Valley Specific Plan, a framework covering nearly 52,000 acres beside the Salton Sea.

Margaret has been a sought-after instructor for California's Continuing Judicial Studies Program, where she educates Superior Court judges, appellate justices, and court attorneys on the latest CEQA and environmental law developments. Her expertise extends to teaching roles at UCLA and USC and contributing to key publications like *Exactions and Impact Fees in California*. Her ability to demystify legal intricacies has made her a trusted thought leader and a frequent speaker at conferences statewide.

Margaret is admitted to practice in California state courts, the U.S. Supreme Court, and the Ninth Circuit. She is also deeply committed to advancing diversity in the legal profession and inspiring the next generation of attorneys.

EDUCATION

Loyola Law School, JD, 1986

University of California, Los Angeles, BA, 1977

ADMISSIONS

California, 1986 – Bar No. 126336

U.S. District Court, Northern District of California

U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit

Supreme Court of the United States

PRACTICE AREAS

Land Use & Environmental

Air Quality

CEQA/NEPA

Climate Change & Sustainability

Land Entitlements

Wildlife & Natural Resources

Energy, Utilities & Renewables

HONORS & AWARDS

Trial & Litigation

- Planners Emeritus Network (PEN) Honors Award – *American Planning Association California Chapter* (2026)
- *The Best Lawyers in America*® – Environmental Law, Land Use and Zoning Law, Litigation – Land Use and Zoning (2007–2027)
- Southern California Super Lawyers list in the categories of Environmental, Land Use & Zoning, State, Local & Municipal – *Thomson Reuters' Super Lawyers*® (2005–2026)
- 500 Leading Environmental Lawyers – The Green 500 – *Lawdragon* (2026)
- “Lawyer of the Year,” Litigation – Land Use and Zoning, Los Angeles – Best Lawyers (2015, 2022, 2027)
- AV Preeminent – *Martindale-Hubbell*® (2006–Present)
- Women of Influence: Attorneys – *Los Angeles Business Journal* (2023)
- Top 100 Lawyers – *Los Angeles Business Journal* (2022)
- Law Firm Visionary – *Los Angeles Times* (2021)
- Community Impact Advocate – *Los Angeles Business Journal* (2021)
- Elite Boutique Trailblazer – *National Law Journal* (2019)
- Leaders in Law – *Los Angeles Business Journal* (2019)
- Amicus Service Award – *Building Industry Association* (2019)
- Inaugural Dean’s Distinguished Instructor Award for over 15 years of excellence in teaching – *UCLA Extension* (2006)

PROFESSIONAL & COMMUNITY AFFILIATIONS

- Santa Monica College Foundation Board, Chair (2020–Present), Vice Chair (2019–2020)
- UCLA Land Use & Planning Conference, Co-Chair (1992–2018)
- University of Southern California, Gould School of Law, Adjunct Professor, Land Use Law (2004–2010)
- The State Bar of California, Environmental Law and Public Law Sections, Public Law Executive Committee Member (1993–1999), Chair (1997–1998)
- Los Angeles County Bar Association, Environmental Law Section; Real Property Section; State and Local Government Section; Land Use Subcommittee, Past Chair; Environmental Law, Executive Committee
- American Planning Association (APA), Board member, Planner Emeritus Network
- Association of Environmental Professionals (AEP)

REPRESENTATIVE EXPERIENCE

- **Imperial County – Lithium Valley Specific Plan.** The Lithium Valley Specific Plan sets forth a comprehensive framework to transform the Imperial Valley into a hub for renewable energy, mineral recovery, manufacturing, and logistics across 51,786 acres adjacent to the Salton Sea. This plan is proposed to assist California in its efforts to decarbonize the electricity sector and is a crucial pillar of the California Air Resources Board's 2022 Scoping Plan to address climate change. Margaret is advising the County on all aspects of the Specific Plan and its EIR.
- **City of Brisbane – Brisbane Baylands Specific Plan.** Margaret is currently assisting Brisbane in its review of a complex specific plan application for the Brisbane Baylands, an approximately 733-acre site located primarily in Brisbane. The project site, located across U.S. 101 from the San Francisco Bay, encompasses a former railyard and municipal landfill, as well as the Brisbane Lagoon.
- **City of Brisbane – Logistics Center.** Legal assistance for the preparation of an EIR and project entitlements for the redevelopment of the Guadalupe Quarry including the construction and operation of an approximately 1.3 million square foot warehouse, and related closure and reclamation of the existing quarry.
- **Port of Redwood City – Ferry Terminal Project.** The Redwood City Ferry Terminal Project proposes a public ferry service to the mid-peninsula with Redwood City representing the southernmost hub for the San Francisco Bay Ferry system. This potential service will provide a new transportation alternative connecting the mid-peninsula to San Francisco and the East Bay, reduce automobile traffic, and enhance emergency preparedness for the movement of first responders and supplies by water after a catastrophic event. Margaret serves as outside legal counsel on all aspects of the proposed project and EIR.
- **Port of Los Angeles (POLA) – Southern California International Gateway Project.** Large-Scale Capital Improvement Projects, and Litigation. Extensive legal oversight and review on numerous Environmental Impact Statements/Environmental Impact Reports (EIS/EIRs) and multiple related legal opinions for projects at the Port of Los Angeles. Margaret was instrumental in negotiating acceptable mitigation measures with environmental and community groups active in the Port of Los Angeles area and negotiating a Memorandum of Understanding with the California Attorney General's Office related to climate change for over a dozen, large-scale expansion and redesign projects on the Port of Los Angeles property.
- **Southern California Association of Governments (SANDAG) – Regional Transportation Plan & Sustainable Communities Strategies.** Margaret has served as SANDAG's CEQA and land use counsel since the late 1980s. She provided comprehensive legal guidance to SANDAG's project team and Board on RTP/SCSs and their EIRs: the 2011 RTP/SCS and the 2015 Regional Plan. She is currently advising on the update to the 2025 Regional RTP/SCS. Her work includes detailed analyses demonstrating compliance with all applicable transportation planning and environmental laws and regulations.

PUBLISHED DECISIONS

- *Alliance for a Regional Solution to Airport Congestion, et al. v. City of Los Angeles (LAWA/SPAS)* (2013)
- *Friends of Lacy Historic Neighborhood v. City of Santa Ana* (2010)
- *The Open Monterey Project v. Monterey County, et al.* (2010)
- *Conquest Student Housing, LLC v. City of Los Angeles* (2008)
- *Citizens for Quality of Life v. City of Encinitas* (2008)
- *Rincon Del Diablo Mun. Water Dist. v. San Diego County Water Authority* (2004) 121 Cal.App.4th 813
- *Utility Cost Management v. East Bay Municipal Utility District* (2000) 79 Cal.App.4th 1242
- *Garat v. City of Riverside* (1991) 2 Cal.App.4th 259