SACRAMENTO KINGS GOLDEN 1 CENTER



California's Go-To Firm for Large, Controversial Urban Developments

When Sacramento set an ambitious timeline to build the $535 million Golden 1 Center—a state-of-the-art home for the Kings—their vision went far beyond basketball. They envisioned a vibrant, mixed-use "Entertainment District" that would turn six downtown blocks into a world-class hub for games, concerts, and live events. But big visions come with big challenges.

Facing a maze of legal issues that could have derailed the project, the City turned to Meyers Nave. In the end, we defeated every roadblock, brought Golden 1 Center to life, and created a roadmap for future stadium projects tied to retaining or relocating professional sports teams.

Our First Focus: Keeping the Kings in Sacramento

The NBA held an option to relocate the Kings if a new stadium wasn't built

quickly enough. We helped the City develop a public-private funding plan and enforce loan agreements to share stadium costs and keep the team rooted in the community.

To protect the funding plan, we blocked a ballot measure that would have required a public vote on the City's $255 million stadium subsidy—avoiding delays and opposition that could have jeopardized the deal.

Securing the Location

With the Kings staying in Sacramento, the next step was securing the ideal site in the heart of downtown. When negotiations for the final piece of property hit a snag, we litigated and won a high-profile eminent domain battle that kept construction on track.

Debunking Constitutional Challenges

The City faced constitutional challenges to SB 743, a special statute designed to streamline review for the project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Critics argued it was an overreach, but we defended the statute's validity and won. This led to the first appellate decision on the constitutionality of a project-specific CEQA law.

Defeating Environmental Lawsuits

Environmental lawsuits accused the City of "pre-committing" to the arena and starting eminent domain without proper CEQA review. We defeated every lawsuit and appeal, leading to the first appellate interpretation of a CEQA statute that allows cities to begin eminent domain before completing environmental review.

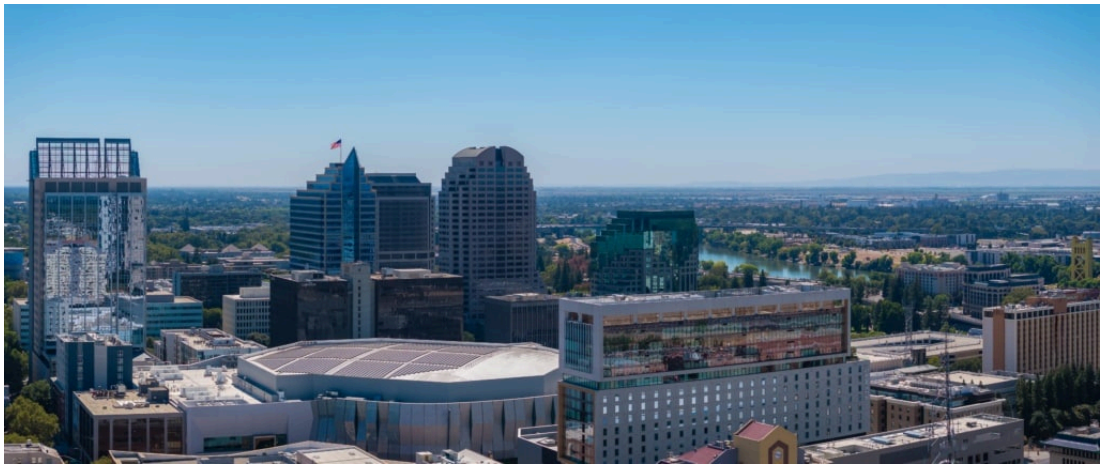
The Final Test: Eleventh-Hour Fraud and Collusion Claims

With construction well underway, the stakes couldn't have been higher in *Gonzalez v. Johnson*, a last-minute courtroom showdown that would decide the fate of the half-built arena. Plaintiffs accused the City and the Kings' owners of fraud, collusion, misuse of funds, and negotiating a "secret subsidy" to build Golden 1 Center. Over 11 days, 18 witnesses, and 150 exhibits, we dismantled every claim and won decisively.

We also broke new legal ground by defending the City's bond issuance as a "significant public benefit" under the Marks-Roos Local Bond Pooling Act, a first in California. Our success here provided much-needed guidance for future projects involving public financing.

This victory capped our unbeaten winning streak and was highlighted by the Daily Journal as a "Top Defense Result."

A Victory for Sacramento, A Legacy for the Future



Today, Golden 1 Center stands as one of the world's greatest sports and entertainment destinations because Meyers Nave delivered when it mattered most—a downtown icon, the Kings' legacy secured, and proof that we are California's go-to law firm for bold and transformative projects.

See also:
https://www.meyersnave.com/wp-content/uploads/Build-the-arena-and-lawsuits-will-come.pdf

---

Related Expertise

- Land Use & Environmental
- Trial & Litigation

Related Industries

- Government & Public Policy
- Real Estate & Housing
- Sports & Entertainment
- Transportation & Infrastructure

Related Attorneys



Adam Lindgren
PRINCIPAL & EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER



Amrit Kulkarni
PRINCIPAL



David Skinner
PRINCIPAL



David Mehretu
PRINCIPAL



Deborah Fox
MANAGING PRINCIPAL



Jenny Riggs
PRINCIPAL



Julia Bond
PRINCIPAL



Russell Morse
PRINCIPAL



Shaye Diveley
PRINCIPAL