

Daily Journal

APRIL 27, 2011

REAL ESTATE TOP LAND USE LEADERS 2011



Amrit Kulkarni

Meyers Nave Riback Silver & Wilson
Oakland

Notable Clients: Port of Los Angeles, University of California Regents, city of Los Angeles, city of Fresno

500+ Acres of Projects Worked on in 2010-11



Port of Los Angeles

Diversification was the key to keeping the law firm of Meyers Nave on track when the real estate market derailed.

Early on, with everyone scrambling for residential and commercial business during the flush times, Kulkarni said his firm saw the wisdom in tapping into infrastructure and large-scale institutional projects for such clients as the Port of Los Angeles and the University of California.

“We felt that it was important to set ourselves apart and develop an expertise in areas that were not dependent on any one industry,” he said. “It was one of the wisest decisions we ever made.”

With cases that ranged from pipelines and transportation to master plans, to global warming and clean-air issues, Kulkarni said he was continually challenged by the mix of politics, economics, the environment and the law.

One of the biggest trends he spotted in his practice is how all of the players view development in California since the recession.

“The major shift is in seeing the environmental regional impacts,” he said. “Before, it was very local. We’re going from micro to macro, and I’m seeing more of that — especially on the types of projects we’re working on.”

Both the proponents and opponents of a project are demanding this, Kulkarni said, because those projects are under increased scrutiny and often generate controversy.

In one such dispute, Kulkarni successfully defended the port in a California Environmental Quality Act lawsuit filed by the city of Riverside. The suit challenged the port’s certification of an en-

vironmental impact report for the China Shipping Container Terminal Project, alleging that the port failed to adequately analyze regional transportation impacts. *City of Riverside v. City of Los Angeles*, 30-2009-00123216-CU-WM-CXC, (Orange Super. Ct.)

He is defending the environmental impact report in an appeal.

“We try to find ways to work with opponents to try to find reasonable solutions,” he said. “But sometimes there are intransigent opponents who want to fight, and we have a very strong litigation practice. But most of the time, we can get them resolved without litigation.”

— Pat Broderick