

Steven H. Kaufmann

Partner | Los Angeles

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Steve Kaufmann is one of the foremost Coastal land use lawyers in California. He has more than four decades of experience representing the California Coastal Commission and landowners, developers, public entities and public utilities with matters before that agency. His work has involved a broad array of Coastal Commission administrative matters, as well as a substantial amount of litigation involving challenges to or defense of Commission decisions. Steve's expertise includes every aspect of California coastal regulation including coastal development permits, appeals, federal consistency certification review and appeals to the Secretary of Commerce, exemptions, local coastal programs, port master plans, public works plans, enforcement, and legislation, as well as related local entitlements and compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

He has a track record for producing successful results for clients on a host of projects involving complex energy or transportation issues; wetlands, environmentally sensitive habitat and other habitat-related issues; golf courses, marinas, traditional hotels, timeshares and condominium hotels; residences, subdivisions, and commercial uses; and public agency projects. Prior to entering private practice, Steve spent from 1977 to 1991 at the California Attorney General's office, representing the California Coastal Commission, as well as other state agencies, including the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, California State Lands Commission, and State Department of Fish and Wildlife.

EXPERIENCE

- Bernardo Shores Project: 190-unit residential project approved adjacent to San Diego Bay in the City of Imperial Beach
- Sunroad Coasterra Restaurant Project: Bayfront restaurant on East Harbor Island in the Port of San Diego and subsequent litigation upholding the Commission's approval
- Sunroad Hotel Project: Port master plan amendment for hotel on East Harbor Island in the Port of San Diego and subsequent litigation overturning the Commission's denial
- MB 9 Residential Project: Local coastal program amendment for residential subdivision approved in the Mission Beach area of the City of San Diego
- Costa Azul Project: Successful challenge to Commission assertion of appeal jurisdiction over hotel, office, and restaurant project in Carmel Valley area of the City of San Diego
- Whole Foods Project: Commission determination of no substantial issue based on lack of appeal jurisdiction
- Solana Beach LUP Litigation: Successful defense of Commission-certified land use plan for the City of Solana Beach

- North Coast Corridor (NCC) Project: Federal consistency, public works plan, and local coastal program amendments for SANDAG and Caltrans' 30-mile, I-5 highway widening and double rail tracking project approved from the City of San Diego to the City of Oceanside
- Rosalena Trail: Settlement of Coastal Act violation for HOA creating new public access trail above Batiquitos Lagoon in Carlsbad
- Decommissioning of San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station: Approval of decommissioning of the onshore component of the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station
- Headlands Access: Settlement of 5-year enforcement lawsuit between City of Dana Point and Commission over public access through the Headlands residential development
- Wave Resort Project: Hotel and hostel project approved in the City of Dana Point
- The Ranch at Laguna Beach: Hotel renovation and public access project in the City of Laguna Beach and subsequent litigation upholding the Commission's approval
- Pacific Edge Hotel Project: hotel renovation and addition approved in City of Laguna Beach
- Newport Banning Ranch Project: 895-unit residential, hotel, hostel, oil field abandonment, site remediation, wetland and ESHA restoration, and public access project in the City of Newport Beach
- Sunset Ridge Park Project: City coastal park project adjacent to Banning Ranch approved in the City of Newport Beach
- Parkside Estates Project: Local coastal program amendment and permit for Shea Homes' 111-unit residential subdivision, habitat restoration and public access project approved adjacent to Bolsa Chica in the City of Huntington Beach
- Transpacific Fiber Optic Cable Project: Approval of Tyco transpacific fiber optic cable project from the City of Hermosa Beach to Asia
- San Pedro Bluffs Projects: Successful trial court defense of lawsuit challenging Commission approval of two oceanfront blufftop residences
- OceanWay LNG Project: Woodside Natural Gas LNG terminal offshore from Los Angeles International Airport
- Venice Breeze Suites Hotel: Conversion of 31-unit apartment building to short-term hotel rentals and an apartment unit on Ocean Front Walk in Venice, City of Los Angeles
- Shore Hotel Project: Hotel project approved with low-cost component in City of Santa Monica
- Whole Foods in the Park at Cross Creek Project: Whole Foods Market approved in City of Malibu Civic Center
- Malibu Parks Access Enhancement Plan: Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy local coastal program amendment and public works plan for coastal parks in the City of Malibu
- Crummer Project: 5-lot residential subdivision on coastal bluff in the City of Malibu
- Seabridge Project: Residential, marina, and commercial project in Channel Islands Harbor approved in City of Oxnard
- North Shore at Mandalay Bay: 292-unit residential and resource-protected area and wetland/habitat restoration project approved in the City of Oxnard
- Breakers Way: 9-lot residential subdivision approved in Oxnard Shores, City of Oxnard
- Kracke STR Rentals: Successful published appellate decision holding City of Santa Barbara cannot ban short-term vacation rentals without an LCP amendment or coastal development permit
- ARCO Dos Pueblos Golf Links Project: Golf course on oceanfront bluff on Gaviota Coast, Santa Barbara County, and subsequent litigation upholding Commission approval
- Dos Pueblos Residential Project: two residential estates on oceanfront bluff on Gaviota Coast, Santa Barbara County, and subsequent litigation upholding LAFCO annexation
- ExxonMobil Interim Trucking Project: Phased restart of ExxonMobil Santa Ynez Unit facilities by trucking limited crude oil production to receiver sites
- Vahevala Project: ExxonMobil slant drilling project from Vandenberg AFB into the Tranquillon Ridge in state and federal waters
- Vandenberg Dunes Golf Resort Project: Air Force golf course project outside the coastal zone boundary on Vandenberg Air Force Base

- Martin Resorts Project: Bluff restoration to protect three existing oceanfront hotels and reconstruction of circular stairway to the beach approved in the City of Pismo Beach
- South Silver Shoals Project: 19-unit residential subdivision approved in the City of Pismo Beach
- Black Hill Villas Project: 16-unit residential subdivision, riparian restoration, and public access project approved in the City of Morro Bay
- Stolo Family Winery Project: Winery and wine tasting facility at vineyard approved in Cambria, County of San Luis Obispo
- Highlands Inn Timeshare Project: Hotel timeshare conversion approved in Carmel area of Monterey County
- Monterey Bay Shores Resort Project: Hotel, condominium hotel, and residential condominium resort project approved in the City of Sand City
- Rancho Los Robles Project: Successful trial court defense of lawsuit challenging approval of coastal residential subdivision in North Monterey County
- Bolinas Seawall Project: Successful trial court decision overturning Commission decision on public/private seawall in Bolinas for denial of fair hearing
- Reed Project: Success challenge to appeal and substantial issue determination on residential remodel project in Mendocino

INSIGHTS

PUBLICATIONS

Co-Author, "Continuing Education of the Bar's Administrative Mandamus," *CEB 2019 California Administrative Mandamus*, 2019

Revision Author, "California Environmental Law & Land Use Practice, Chapter 66," *Coastal Zone Regulation (Manaster & Selmi)*, 2017

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

Speaker, "High Seas, High Cost: HOA Action for Sound Coastal Policy," Educational Community for HOA Homeowners' (ECHO) Community Conversation, 07.07.2021

Speaker, "Coastal Litigation and Case Law Update," Nossaman's 2019 California Coastal Law Conference, Huntington Beach, CA, 09.10.2019

Speaker, "Coastal Commission Enforcement & Condition Compliance," Nossaman's 2017 California Coastal Law Conference, La Jolla, CA, 10.10.2017

Speaker, "Policy and Planning Considerations to Achieve Compliance with the Public Access Requirements of the Coastal Act," CLE International's California Coastal Law Conference, Century City, CA, 09.22.2017

Speaker, "Navigating the Process of Recording Offers to Dedicate: You're Not Done Yet," CLE International's California Coastal Law Conference, Century City, CA, 09.22.2016

Speaker, "The Road Less Traveled - Achieving Coastal Permitting Approval Through Development of A Public Works Plan," Association of Environmental Professionals 2015 California State Conference, Santa Barbara, CA, 03.24.2015

Speaker, "Federal Consistency – The Nuts and Bolts," CLE International's California Coastal Law Conference, 03.30.2009

Speaker, "What Happens When a Locally-Issued Permit is Appealed for Review by the Coastal Commission," CLE International's California Coastal Law Conference, 03.30.2009

HONORS

Recognized as the "Lawyer of the Year" for Land Use and Zoning Law in Los Angeles by *Best Lawyers in America*®, 2022, 2023

Included in *The Best Lawyers in America*® for Land Use and Zoning Law and Litigation - Land Use and Zoning, 2018-2024

Listed, *The Legal 500 United States*, Industry Focus - Real Estate - Land Use/Zoning, 2020-2022

Selected to the Southern California Super Lawyers list, 2005, 2007-2015, 2017-2020

Named a "Top 100 Lawyer" by *Daily Journal*, 2019

Named one of the Top Litigators & Trial Lawyers in Los Angeles by the *Los Angeles Business Journal*, 2019

California Attorney General's Award for Excellence, 1990

PRACTICES

Environment & Land Use

Coastal Development

Land Use Entitlements & Litigation

CEQA & NEPA

Litigation

INDUSTRIES

Energy & Utilities

EDUCATION

Loyola Law School, J.D., 1974

University of California, Los Angeles, B.A., 1971

ADMISSIONS

California

U.S. Supreme Court

Supreme Court of California

U.S. Court of Appeals, Ninth Circuit

U.S. District Court, Central District of California