

**38th Annual Conference** *In-Person!*

**September 30-October 1, 2024**



Publications and MCLE Conference Programs  
for the California Water Bar since 1989

# California Water Law & Policy

Dear Colleague,

We are pleased to invite you to join us at Argent Communications Group's 2024 annual California Water Law & Policy Conference—in-person this year at the San Diego Marriott La Jolla Hotel.

Right now, California Water Law is a fast-moving body of law where water rights and the governance of water rights and water supply impacts landowners, agricultural interests, municipalities, and developers alike—and both water rights and water supply intersect with land use law.

This year we focus on multiple statewide concerns: Managing flood control and water storage; water project operations and species protection; the status of the Delta project proposal; issues with dwindling Colorado River supplies; and the administration of groundwater under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. We don't skimp on perspectives here with presentations that thoroughly address these key areas of water rights and water supply. Our faculty "dig deeper" with updates you need to remain savvy in your practice.

We are honored this year to have a Keynote Presentation by Karla Nemeth, Director of the California Department of Water Resources.

We also cover other timely issues of growing concern that water practitioners find themselves having to address day in and day out: Climate change modelling to help you plan for water supply and flood challenges ahead; Waters of the United States and the "reach" of the federal Clean Water Act; Tribal water rights; pending water-related federal legislation; and a CEQA update for water law practitioners.

Our conference is designed to hone in on the issues that will most impact your water-related practice and the governance of water in the state. As an attendee, you will gain practical knowledge on the legal, policy, regulatory, and technical sides of the issues from our outstanding faculty from federal and state regulatory agencies, the academic community, local public and private water suppliers, consultants, and other water associations and groups—and top water law attorneys from throughout the state.

Be sure to register today for this informative conference and find out what impact these critical topics will have on each other—and how the potential outcomes will impact your practice, agency, or organization in the future.

Sincerely,



Meredith Nikkel, Esq., Program Co-Chair  
Downey Brand, Sacramento



Miles Krieger, Esq., Program Co-Chair  
Best, Best & Krieger, Riverside

The only California Water Law & Policy conference produced by the Publishers of the *California Water Law & Policy Reporter* and co-sponsored by many of the state's top legal firms.



## Conference Co-Sponsors:



**REGISTER TODAY!**

800-419-2741

<register@argentco.com>

Day I

- 8:15 **Day I Overview with Critical Detail** (Meredith Nikkel, Esq., Downey Brand, Sacramento)
- 8:30 **Climate Change and the State of Water Supply in California** (Michael Anderson, PhD, State Climatologist, California Department of Water Resources, Sacramento)
- 9:15 **Managing Flood Control and New Storage Plans**
- **Planning for Too Much Water—Flood Control** (Scott Shapiro, Esq., Downey Brand, Sacramento)
  - **Forecast-Informed Reservoir Operations (FIRO)—An Emerging Approach to Managing Water Storage** (Grant Davis, General Manager, Sonoma County Water Agency, Santa Rosa)
  - **Capturing Flood Flows Water—California’s Recent Legislative Efforts** (Darren Key, Esq., Fennemore, Oakland)
- 10:30 **BREAK**
- 10:45 **PFAS: Implications for Compliance and Transactions** (Keith Walker, Esq., Cox, Castle & Nicholson, Los Angeles)
- 11:15 **Clean Water Act Update: Permitting in the Post-Sackett World** (Brian Plant, Esq., Remy, Moose & Manley, Sacramento)
- 11:45 **Tribal Water Rights Update** (Miles Krieger, Esq., Best Best & Krieger, Riverside)
- 12:15 **LUNCH BREAK**
- 1:30 **KEYNOTE ADDRESS: The State of the State’s Water Resources** (Karla Nemeth, Director, Department of Water Resources, Sacramento)
- 2:15 **Pending Federal Water Legislation** (Amy Steinfeld, Esq., Brownstein, Hyatt, Farber, Schreck, Santa Barbara)
- 2:45 **BREAK**
- 3:00 **CEQA Update for Water Practitioners** (Travis Brooks, Esq., Miller Starr Regalia, Walnut Creek)
- 3:45 **Water Project Operations and Species Protection Implications?**
- **Environmental Review of Long-Term Operations of the SWP and CVP** (Thaddeus L. Bettner, Executive Director, Sacramento River Settlement Contractor Corporation, Willows)
  - **Federal Water Contractor Perspectives** (Rebecca R. Akroyd, General Counsel, San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority, Los Banos)

- **DWR’s Incidental Take Permit Application for State Water Project Operations** (Lenny Grimaldo, Ph.D., Assistant Environmental Director, Department of Water Resources, Sacramento)

5:15 **ADJOURN TO HOSTED RECEPTION**

DAY II

- 8:30 **Day II Overview with Critical Detail** (Miles Krieger, Esq., Best Best & Krieger, Riverside)
- 8:45 **The Delta, So Many Moving Parts**
- **Upstream Diversion and Downstream Salinity: The Delta Conveyance Project in Context** (Paul Stanton Kibel, Professor Emeritus, Golden Gate University School of Law, San Francisco)
  - **Bay Delta Water Quality Plan and Voluntary Agreements** (Richard Roos-Collins, Esq., Principal, Water & Power Law Group, Berkeley)
  - **A Local Perspective on the Delta Conveyance Facility** (Kelley Taber, Esq., Somach Simmons & Dunn, Sacramento)
  - **Delta Conveyance Facility Water Right Change Petition Process** (Stefanie Morris, Esq., Owner, CalNeva Water, Incline Village, NV)
- 10:15 **BREAK**
- 10:45 **Colorado River Update: Grappling with Dwindling Supply and Federal Oversight**
- **The View from California** (Jeff Kightlinger, Esq., Principal, Acequia Consulting, South Pasadena)
  - **The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Forecast** (Russell Callejo, Project Manager, U. S. Bureau of Reclamation, Denver)
- 11:45 **LUNCH BREAK**
- 1:00 **Liquid Asset: How Business and Government Can Partner to Solve the Freshwater Crisis** (Barton H. “Buzz” Thompson, Jr. Professor of Natural Resources Law, Stanford Law School, Palo Alto)
- 1:45 **SGMA Panel** (Moderator: Brian Hamilton, Esq. Downey Brand, Sacramento)
- **Inadequate Basin Probationary Status Update** (Valerie Kincaid, Esq., Paris Kincaid Wasiewski, Sacramento)
  - **SGMA and Groundwater Basin Adjudication Update** (Eric Garner, Esq., Best Best & Krieger, Los Angeles)
  - **Harmonizing Adjudications and SGMA Compliance** (Zach Smith, Esq., O’Melweny Meyers, Newport Beach)
- 3:00 **ADJOURN**

**Program Co-Chairs:**

**Meredith Nikkel** is a Partner at her law firm and practices water rights law for water users in administrative and state and federal court proceedings related to operation of the CVP and related water projects and serves as special counsel to water suppliers.

**Miles Krieger** is Of Counsel and a member of his law firm's Environmental Law and Natural Resources practice group. His practice focuses on environmental litigation and regulatory issues, with an emphasis on California water rights matters.

**Program Keynote:**

**Karla Nemeth** holds an M.A. in Public Administration and oversees DWR operation of the SWP, management of floodwaters, dam safety, habitat restoration, and provides technical assistance for projects for local water needs.

**Program Faculty:**

**Rebecca Akroyd** performs legal work, including preparing and issuing legal opinions, memoranda, and other legal documents and representation before administrative agencies and in federal and state court.

**Michael Anderson** works in a collaborative position between the Department of Water Resources and NOAA to provide climate data services for the state as the State Climatologist.

**Thad Bettner** represents local districts, mutual water companies, partnerships, corporations, municipalities, and individuals in protecting and preserving members' water rights.

**Travis Brooks** represents public and private clients in all aspects of land use law including matters under CEQA, the entitlement process, in litigation and in transactional land use matters.

**Russell Callejo** is the Bureau of Reclamation's project manager for the "Post-2026" effort to develop new long-term operational guidance for major Colorado River reservoirs.

**Richard Roos-Collins** represents governmental entities, tribes, and state agencies in complex cases involving multiple parties, interests, and laws.

**Grant Davis** is responsible for providing drinking water in portions of Sonoma and Marin counties and wastewater management for eight zones and districts throughout Sonoma County.

**Eric Garner** practices water rights and water supply law including surface water matters, and for the past two decades, has worked extensively in some of the state's most important groundwater basins.

**Lenny Grimaldo** has been extensively involved in the Incidental Take Permit for Long-Term Operation of the State Water Project.

**Brian Hamilton** represents clients in all phases of water rights and environmental law litigation in the areas of commercial,

real estate, and employment law and in complex commercial derivative actions.

**Darien Key** focuses on CEQA, public interest law, municipal law under the Brown Act, Public Records Act, environmental, energy and natural resources, and in all phases of land use law.

**Paul Kibel** represents governmental entities, tribes, and state agencies and was a tenured Professor at Golden Gate University School of Law, where he taught Water and Environmental and Natural Resources Law.

**Jeffrey Kightlinger** is a renowned expert on water rights including on Colorado River law. Jeff previously was the longest serving Chief Executive Officer of The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California.

**Valerie Kincaid** focuses on water law, including water rights, transfers, and quality issues. Her experience extends to environmental law issues related to the use of water resources.

**Stefanie Morris** is Owner of CalNeva Water and serves as Outside Counsel to DWR on the Delta Conveyance Project change petition.

**Brian Plant** advises public agencies and private project applicants regarding the federal CWA, federal and state ESAs, water quality matters and the National Historic Preservation Act, and in project permitting.

**Scott Shapiro** has extensive expertise representing clients in flood protection improvement projects throughout California's Central Valley and the West, as well as in litigating issues of water rights and water supply.

**Zach Smith** represents clients in water supply and water management issues including in surface and groundwater litigation and in water right assessments, water transfers, water banking and under SGMA and the Reclamation Reform Act.

**Amy Steinfeld** advises water districts, cities, agricultural interests and developers in all aspects of water law and at the intersection of water law and the land use law entitlement process.

**Kelley Taber** counsels public agencies, landowners and developers on surface and groundwater issues and compliance with environmental laws, with a particular emphasis on the CEQA, NEPA, and the ESA.

**Barton H. "Buzz" Thompson** is the Robert E. Paradise Professor of Natural Resources Law at Stanford Law School, a Senior Fellow at the Woods Institute for the Environment, and a Professor in Stanford University's Doerr School of Sustainability.

**Keith Walker** focuses on Brownfield redevelopment and complex remediation in the context of regulatory compliance and environmental risk management in the pre-acquisition and development project phases.

**Location and Lodging:**

The site of the program is the San Diego Marriott La Jolla, 4240 La Jolla Villiage Dr., La Jolla, 92037. A block of rooms has been reserved at a special negotiated rate of \$229. To register for your room at the discounted rate, [CLICK HERE](#), or call 1-858-587-1414, and ask for the "California Water Law Conference" discount. The number of rooms at this rate is limited, so make your reservations early.

**Tuition:**

Conference tuition is \$995. A discount of \$100 is available for individuals from government agencies, public interest groups, or academia, or for each attendee when two or more people from one firm or organization register together.

Tuition includes continental breakfasts, refreshment breaks, hosted conference networking reception, formatted program materials prepared by the Faculty, and a three-month subscription to the *California Water Law & Policy Reporter* (a \$240 value).



**Three Ways to Register:**

Early registration is encouraged. To register: (1) To register online, [CLICK HERE](#); (2) Mail the completed registration form on the reverse to: Argent Communications Group, PO Box 1135, Batavia, IL 60510-1135; (3) Email to <register@argentco.com>. Full payment or purchase order is due with registration.

**MCLE Credit:**

MCLE accreditation has been requested for this program. Pending MCLE accreditation approval by the State Bar of California for 12 MCLE hours.

**Cancellation Policy:**

Full refunds (less a \$100 processing fee) will be made only if notice is given two weeks in advance. Substitutions are encouraged. Argent Communications Group reserves the right to cancel any program and assumes no responsibility for personal loss.

**38th Conference Program** *In-Person!*  
**California Water Law & Policy**

September 30-October 1, 2024

**REGISTRATION FORM**

**Yes!** Please register the following:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email (required): \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email (required): \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email (required): \_\_\_\_\_

Firm/Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ St: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**TUITION:**

- \$995 per person, or
  - \$895 each for two or more from the same firm, or
  - \$895 government and nonprofit employees, or
  - \$795 each for two or more government and nonprofit employees
- Promo code: \_\_\_\_\_

**PAYMENT METHOD:**

- Check enclosed. Payable to Argent Communications Group
- P.O. attached. **OR**
- Charge my:  Visa  MasterCard      Exp Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Card #: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature (required): \_\_\_\_\_

Email (required): \_\_\_\_\_



PO Box 1135  
Batavia, IL 60510-1135

**REGISTER TODAY!**

**800-419-2741**

**<register@argentco.com>**

**38th Conference Program** *In-Person!*  
**California Water Law & Policy**

September 30-October 1, 2024

**“California Water Law, Policy, and Regulation 2024”**

WITH A KEYNOTE PRESENTATION BY:



**Karla Nemeth, Director**  
California Department of Water Resources  
“The State of the State’s Water Resources”

WHAT ATTENDEES SAY ABOUT THIS CONFERENCE:

“This conference was terrific. I appreciated the breadth and depth of the presentations and will use the information going forward.”

—David Edwards, Deputy City Attorney  
Los Angeles City Attorney’s Office  
Department of Water and Power

“The conference formula is spot on and allows enough flexibility to adjust to current topics. One could attend this conference every year and walk away with new, relevant, and useful information.”

—Paul R. Boughman, Special Counsel, Water Law  
Western Area Counsel Office, Camp Pendleton