

## Cox Castle Adds 2 Land Use And Environmental Attys In SF

By [James Mills](#) | 2023-04-06 16:40:50 -0400 · [Listen to article](#)

Real estate firm [Cox Castle & Nicholson LLP](#) announced Thursday that it's adding a former [Paul Hastings LLP](#) environmental expert and a former [Miller Starr Regalia LLP](#) land use pro as partners in its San Francisco office.

Gordon Hart joins the Cox Castle environmental team after spending the past 25 years at Paul Hastings. Additionally, Arielle Harris joins the Cox Castle land use team after spending the past three years at Miller Starr.

"Arielle and Gordon's wealth of experience in the land use and environmental arenas combined with their longstanding deep relationships with the real estate development, governmental, and regulatory communities, will be a tremendous complement to our first-in-class land use and environmental practices," Cox Castle co-chair Mathew Wyman said in a statement. "We continue to add even greater depth and expertise in our land use and environmental practices and are thrilled to welcome Arielle and Gordon to the firm."

Hart handles environmental and land use matters, as well as government advocacy. He specializes in transactional, permitting, enforcement, and litigation issues on behalf of real estate developers and owners, energy project developers, and manufacturers.

Hart told Law360 by email on Thursday that he has worked with Cox Castle attorneys on many matters over the years and now seemed like the right time to join them.



Gordon Hart



Arielle Harris

"There is no other law firm that has as many attorneys who 'speak the same language' as I do — the language of how to help clients develop projects on urban infill and contaminated properties," Hart said. "Cox Castle also already represents several of my major clients, so it is beneficial to my clients to consolidate their legal teams."

A 1994 graduate of [University of the Pacific](#)'s McGeorge School of Law, Hart worked for several years for the California state legislature, including as counsel to the Senate Judiciary Committee and as counsel to the speaker of the Assembly. He joined Paul Hastings in 1998.

Hart said public policy and advocacy on environmental and land use issues have been passions for much of his life.

"Halfway through law school, I joined the staff of the California State Senate Committee on Environmental Safety and Toxic Materials. So, there was never any doubt that I would pursue environmental law," Hart said. "With my background in politics and policy, I love the fact that environmental law involves extensive interaction with public officials and requires the ability to articulate how our clients' goals advance public policy objectives."

Meanwhile, Harris represents developers, landowners, and public agencies in connection with land use entitlements, as well as environmental review and permitting for residential, commercial and industrial developments plus public infrastructure projects in California. She handles local planning and zoning law matters, as well as state laws like the California Environmental Quality Act and the Housing Accountability Act and Density Bonus Law. She also handles litigation in the areas of CEQA, land use law, and the public trust doctrine.

Harris told Law360 by email on Thursday that Cox Castle has long been on her radar, and she's happy to be at the firm now.

"Cox Castle was looking to expand its land use practice and add even greater depth and expertise," Harris said. "I was already very familiar with, and impressed by, several of the firm's land use and environmental attorneys, and when this opportunity came up to help grow the land use practice, I was immediately interested."

She's especially impressed by the firm's bench of attorneys.

"What enticed me was the opportunity to work with top-notch attorneys on high-profile and

complex development projects throughout California," she said. "The depth of the firm's real estate and litigation practices was a big draw, particularly in the areas of land use, affordable housing, and natural resources."

Harris earned her law degree in 2008 from the University of California, Hastings College of the Law, which is now known as the University of California College of the Law, San Francisco.

She worked four years as an associate at [Burke Williams & Sorensen LLP](#), then in 2012 moved to [Downey Brand LLP](#), where she spent the next eight years. She joined Miller Starr in 2020.

Harris said she enjoys land use because it keeps her on her toes.

"It is the perfect blend of law, policy, and politics, and it is constantly evolving, so you simply cannot get bored," she said. "It is an area of law that has a big impact on how and where we live and work and how we plan for and build our communities."

Cox Castle was founded in 1968 in Los Angeles. The firm has more than 140 transactional and litigation attorneys in its Los Angeles, Orange County, and San Francisco offices.

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