



## Amy M. Steinfeld

Shareholder

[asteinfeld@bhfs.com](mailto:asteinfeld@bhfs.com)

805.882.1409

**Santa Barbara, California**

Amy Steinfeld's unique practice focuses on the intersection of land use and water law. Amy has more than a decade of experience in the permitting and development of controversial projects throughout the state.

She regularly advises water districts, regulated utilities, cities, developers, and agricultural interests in all aspects of water law. Her matters include water rights permitting and due diligence, complex groundwater adjudications, water transfers, urban water management planning, water supply/demand evaluations under Senate Bill 610 and SB 221, infrastructure development, and all other matters associated with the use, conveyance, development and management of surface water and groundwater supplies.

Amy is also skilled in all facets of land development, from the preparation of environmental documents, to the defense and settlement of complicated multi-party CEQA lawsuits, and ultimately to the implementation of fully permitted projects. Amy is recognized for her specialized experience in Colorado River Issues and Endangered Species Act compliance. Amy's broad understanding of environmental issues, her practical approach to the law, and her ability to work closely with local governments, allow her to efficiently move projects forward and reduce permitting delays. Amy writes and speaks regularly on water and land use issues.

Amy is co-founder and co-chair of the *California H2O Women Conference*. The inaugural event, which was hosted in Santa Barbara, California in January, 2017, was the first of its kind to showcase leading women professionals, their work and contributions to advancing the water industry. The first California H2O Women Conference provided a formal opportunity for 100 of the top women in the water industry to collaborate, coordinate, educate and support each other with the goal of empowering women to change the way we manage California's and the world's most important resource. The second annual *California H2O Women Conference* will be held on November 1 and 2, 2018, at the Bacara Resort and Spa, in Santa Barbara, California.

Before going into law, Amy served as the environmental director and an environmental consultant and analyst for the California Safety Compliance Corporation. She traveled to 37 countries to conduct social and environmental audits of factories for large manufacturing companies, and developed an environmental audit tool. When not at the office, Amy enjoys spending time with her son and taking photographs.

### Practices

Endangered Species, Public Agency, Public Lands, Water

### Industries

Infrastructure

### Representative Matters

- Serves as land use counsel to Cate School, a prestigious private high school on California's Central Coast. The campus includes 178 acres, 320,000 sf of existing structures (dorms, classrooms, administrative buildings, faculty housing and the like), 640,000 sf of impervious surfaces (including parking for 187 cars), and 585,000 sf of recreational open space (playing fields and the like). The school has existed on the site

since 1913. It has secured approval for an update to its Master Plan under which it would construct 180,000 sf of new buildings, 101,000 sf of additional impervious surfaces, and six new faculty homes. An EIR was prepared for the project, and the Master Plan has been approved by the Santa Barbara County Planning Commission. Brownstein has been closely involved in the permitting and environmental review process, including reviewing EIR comment letters and responses to comments, and represented the school before the Planning Commission.

- Secured a ruling in the Sacramento Superior Court that validated the eleven year-old Colorado River Quantification Settlement Agreement and related agreements and secured a key component of long-term reliable water supply for San Diego County. Brownstein team's knowledge and experience of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) played a major role in the victory of this litigation.
- On behalf of a national homebuilder, Brownstein obtained approval of the Water Supply Assessment, final Environmental Impact Report, General Plan Amendments and Specific Plan for development of a 1,500 acre-property in Southern California proposed to include 5,400 residential units and commercial uses.
- Brownstein attorneys won a broad reversal of the trial court's judgment in the complex, coordinated Quantification Settlement Agreement (QSA) cases. The trial-court judgment invalidated twelve of the historic QSA-related agreements, but as a result of this appellate decision, the largest agriculture-to-urban water transfers in United States history, and numerous Colorado River programs that have been created by the United States and other Colorado River Basin states based on the QSA, will continue to be implemented while the remaining issues are decided on remand by the trial court.
- Represented seller of Sacramento River water rights to the 2009 Drought Water Bank, including negotiation of water transfer agreement, acquisition of regulatory approvals and defense against environmental litigation. This water transfer was based on water conservation and groundwater substitution.
- Trial counsel for one of California's largest shareholder-owned public water suppliers in complex litigation to adjudicate and control the water resources in the Santa Maria groundwater basin. The case involved more than 1,000 parties who rely on local water resources and two federally-owned reservoirs. After eight years of litigation, the case was resolved through a settlement stipulation among the vast majority of the parties, thereby providing legal certainty with respect to the use and management of the resource.
- Water rights counsel for a national land developer/home builder with respect to the water supply components of a proposed 5,000 home residential and commercial development in southern California. The project raised numerous water supply and water quality issues, including groundwater storage, replenishment and development, water transfers, conjunctive use, water re-use, flood protection and stormwater management.
- Brownstein successfully negotiated a complex, multi-agency settlement of a water rights complaint alleging violations of the public trust and California Fish and Game Code section 5937, on behalf of one of California's largest wholesale water providers. The settlement provides a perpetual, multimillion-dollar program for the re-operation of numerous dams and associated water supply facilities on three watersheds, including flow enhancements, barrier removals and habitat restoration. Brownstein continues to provide legal support associated with obtaining all regulatory approvals of the settlement and its implementation.
- Ongoing representation of multiple buyers and sellers of water rights in the Sacramento River system for negotiation and implementation of water transfers.
- Representing developer for large multi-family real estate project in Napa County, California related to water supply and utility issues, including use of groundwater, water transfers, conjunctive use, and water reuse and recycling.
- Advised a major California city on reorganization of its water, wastewater and solid waste utilities, including evaluation of dependent and independent special district, privatization and public-private partnership options and financing. Legal services were provided in conjunction with financial consultants to advise the city on

developing an option to meet its short and long term financial goals and commitments.

- Lead Counsel, Lake Arrowhead Enforcement Hearing, State Water Resources Control Board (November 2005) representing the Arrowhead Lake Association.

## **News & Events**

- Amy Steinfeld & Brad Herrema Named Water & Wastes Digest 2017 Young Water Professionals
- Brownstein's Natural Resource Group Secures Decisive Appellate Victory for Much Needed, New Water Supply
- Drought will make water pricey, stymie development
- Hot Topics in California's Water CLE seminar
- Diane De Felice and Amy Steinfeld to Speak at the American Council of Engineering Companies' CEQA and Subdivision Map Act Seminar
- Amy Steinfeld to Speak at the 29th California Water Law & Policy Conference
- Endangered Species Act (ESA): 101
- Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck Secures Much-Needed Access to the Colorado River for the San Diego County Water Authority
- Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck Announces New Shareholders
- American Waterworks Pacific Northwest Section Annual Spring Conference
- Recent Developments Concerning the California Delta
- ESA Briefing and Breakfast
- ESA Briefing and Breakfast
- ACWA Water Law Workshop
- Amy Steinfeld Named One of Pacific Coast Business Times' Top 50 Women in Business

## **Community**

ACWA Legal Affairs Committee, 2018-2019

Board of Directors, Santa Barbara Bicycle Coalition

Board of Advisors, *California Water Law & Policy Reporter*

Secretary, Legal Aid Foundation of Santa Barbara County, 2008-2013

Photo Editor, Santa Barbara Lawyer Magazine Editorial Board, 2007

Guest Lecturer, Global Studies, "Social and Environmental Compliance," Santa Barbara City College

## **Publications & Presentations**

- Brownstein Water: Current Trends in Water Law & Policy, Contributor
- Deeper Dive Into Cadiz Water Project Legal Challenges: Overcoming Federal and State Agency Roadblocks and Legal Hurdles, Speaker, AGWT States' Rights and the Control of Groundwater Conference, Albuquerque, NM, July 18, 2018
- Don't Be Left High & Dry — Consider Water Supplies Before Buying Property, Co-author, *First Tuesday*, June 20, 2018
- Cadiz on the Fast Track?, Speaker, 39th Annual Getches Wilkinson Center Summer Water Conference, Boulder, CO, June 8, 2018
- 3 Counties, 3 Approaches to Cannabis Crops, Author, *Pacific Coast Business Times*, April 20, 2018
- Water Rights Evaluations, Speaker, Water Rights in California Seminar, National Business Institute, San Luis Obispo, CA, January 23, 2018
- Can Tiny Homes Solve Housing Crisis?, Author, *Pacific Coast Business Times*, December 15–21, 2017

- Recycled Water: The Race to Purple Pipes and Beyond, Panelist, 2017 Fall ACWA Conference & Exhibition, Anaheim, CA, November 29, 2017
- What's All the Ruckus About ADUs?, Co-author, *Santa Barbara Lawyer*, November 2017
- Serving Development During Drought: Creative & Sustainable Solutions, Co-author, *Santa Barbara Lawyer*, August 2017

### **Education**

- J.D., 2005, with honors, University of Colorado Law School
- B.A., 2000, *cum laude*, University of California, Los Angeles

### **Admissions**

- California, 2005
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Ninth Circuit

### **Recognition**

*Waste & Wastes Digest*, Young Water Professionals Award, 2017

*Pacific Coast Business Times*, Top 50 Women in Business & Editor's Choice, 2017

*Pacific Coast Business Times*, Who's Who in Professional Services, 2016

*Pacific Coast Business Times*, 40 Under 40, 2013

Contributing Editor, *Association of California Water Agencies' Summary of Appellate Cases Decided by the Court*, 2008-2010

Lead Articles Editor, *Colorado Journal of International Environmental Law and Policy*, University of Colorado School of Law, 2004-2005

President, Environmental Law Society, University of Colorado School of Law, 2003-2004

### **Membership**

Santa Barbara Women Lawyers

Santa Barbara County Bar Association