



Chris Frahm

Shareholder

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San Diego, California

Law, politics and business converge around nearly every issue concerning water, energy and infrastructure. Chris Frahm practices at that intersection, coordinating and strategically planning at the state and local level to help her clients achieve project objectives. She is known for her track record of success in getting water and infrastructure projects done, from initial strategic planning, through agreements. When necessary, she also assists with the defense of those projects against attack in the media, in litigation or otherwise.

Chris assists her clients in navigating the many institutional and political challenges to the development of reliable infrastructure in what continues to be a challenging economy and historic period of change in California. She works closely with key policy leaders and legislative decision-makers to develop and implement public policy based solutions that will meet her clients' water, energy and infrastructure needs while mitigating risk in a changing political, financial and legal landscape.

The head of our San Diego office, Chris is a frequent speaker before a wide variety of professional and community forums, including public agencies and local ratepayer groups, on the subject of water reliability and rates, water distribution system access, level playing field for utilities, and other current water law and public policy issues.

Previous Experience

Chairwoman of the Board, San Diego County Water Authority

Practices

State & Local Legislation & Policy, Federal & State Energy Funding, Energy & Natural Resources, Land Use, Water

Water

Chris' experience and understanding of water issues and politics within the natural resources industry has been an asset to clients for several decades. She serves as special counsel and provides advocacy services for municipalities, utilities, private corporations, public agencies and associations on water supply and infrastructure development projects, groundwater and other regulatory issues.

Most recently, Chris represented the San Diego County Water Authority in their prevailing rate case victory against the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. After five years in court, a judge ruled that the MWD owed the Authority \$188.3 million plus interest for four years of overcharging.

She was a principal architect of the historic San Diego-IID water conservation and transfer agreement, which ultimately became the foundation of California's Quantification Settlement Agreement and 4.4 Plan. That agreement also included an exchange agreement with the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California for transportation of water and \$235 million state funding of Colorado River works.

Chris was also the principal negotiator of a framework resolution of longstanding controversies over groundwater management in the Central and West Basin areas of Los Angeles. Working with environmental groups and other stakeholders, she negotiated historic water conservation recommendations for presentation to the California Public Utilities Commission. □□

Chris has also worked on a seawater desalination project for a major water utility as well as a wide range of water supply and rate issues involving the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. She has served as special counsel of her client's successful challenge in the trial court to Metropolitan's wheeling rate.

Infrastructure

Chris' practice experience includes strategic planning, transactional counseling, negotiation and advocacy efforts on significant infrastructure issues including water, energy and transportation.

Strategy

Chris cut her teeth working on the near- and long-term implications of water supply matters. As the Chair of the Board of the San Diego County Water Authority, she represented the City of San Diego for more than a decade, navigating numerous political challenges related to natural resources, strategy and planning. During that time, she also served as Chairwoman of the Water Policy, Finance and Imported Water Committees of the Board. She also represented the San Diego region on the Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, where she served as Vice Chairwoman of the Board, chaired the Water Policy and Audit Committees and served as Vice-Chair of the Engineering and Operations Committee of the Board.

Representative Matters

- A district encountered a dispute with a Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) regarding jurisdiction over annexations and the district's provision of additional latent services. The district and LAFCO agreed to resolve their dispute through the introduction of special legislation rather than resorting to litigation. Services included drafting special state legislation, working with legislative consultants for the California Assembly and Senate, and governmental relations services.
- Advised private project developers related to proposed desalination plants in Mexico and water supply pipelines to the United States.
- On behalf of San Diego County Water Authority, negotiated a series of complex agreements between state and federal agencies for the settlement of disputes related to California allocation of Colorado River water, including the largest water transfer in United States history, lining of the All-American Canal and water conveyance.

Community

Director Emeritus, San Diego Convention Center Corporation Director Emeritus Program

Member, San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce Public Policy Committee

Board Member, San Diego Downtown Partnership

Board Member, Equinox Project (an initiative of the Center for Sustainable Energy)

Board Member, Southwest Megaregion Alliance

Advisory Committee, Mingei Museum Capital Project

Equality Counsel, Equality California

Host Committee, Equality California's San Diego Equality Awards

Host Committee, Equality California's Los Angeles Equality Awards

Former Member, Executive Committee and Board of Directors, California Foundation on Environment and the Economy (16 years)

Former San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce: Board of Directors; Chair, Water Committee; Chair, Infrastructure Committee

Former Chair of the Board, San Diego Convention Center Corporation

Former Chair of the Board, San Diego Civic Theatre

Dinner Chair, United Cerebral Palsy, Padres Awards Dinner (5 years)

Publications & Presentations

- Water Infrastructure And Resource Allocation: Lessons From California, Moderator, American Bar Association, Section of Environment, Energy, and Resources 26th Fall Conference, San Diego, CA, October 18, 2018
- Property Right or Human Right, Moderator, Urban Water Institute's 25th Annual Conference, San Diego, CA, August 22, 2018
- Cases Could Affect Water Usage in 2017, Author, *Los Angeles Daily Journal*, December 8, 2016
- The Good, The Bad and The Ugly: Where Do We Stand in the Quest for Sustainable Groundwater Management?, *Brownstein Client Alert*, April 12, 2016
- A New Tool for Developing and Financing Public and Private Infrastructure: Enhanced Infrastructure Financing Districts, *Brownstein Client Alert*, May 19, 2015
- San Diego's Perspective on the Rate Structure Case, Speaker, California Water Law Recent Cases & Water in the 21st Century, Water Law Institute, San Diego, CA, June 12-13 2014
- Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck Opens Door to the California Water Market, *Brownstein Client Alert*, April 29, 2014
- Government's Role in Water Investment Opportunities; How the Federal Government Can Facilitate Investment, Moderator, The Real Asset Investor Summit, Water & Agriculture, Palos Verdes, CA, May 16, 2013
- Striking the Balance - Can We Develop the Water, Gas and Energy Supplies We Need and still Protect California's Groundwater and Natural Resources? Or is the answer, "No Fracking Way?", Program Moderator, GRA Annual Legislative Symposium and Lobby Day, Sacramento, CA, April 24, 2013
- Raising the Bar on California Groundwater Management, Annual Legislative Symposium and Lobby Day, Groundwater Resources Association of California with the California Groundwater Coalition, Sacramento, CA, April 25, 2012

Brownstein Water Blog

Brownstein Water: Current Trends in Water Law & Policy

Visit water.bhfs.com for commentary and analysis of timely water law and policy issues.

Education

- J.D., 1976, with honors, University of Southern California Gould School of Law
- B.A., 1973, *summa cum laude*, California State University, Long Beach

Admissions

- California
- Supreme Court of California
- U.S. District Court, Southern District of California
- U.S. District Court, Central District of California
- U.S. District Court, Northern District of California

Recognition

San Diego Business Journal's Women Who Mean Business Award, 2016
Pete Wilson Leadership Award, 1998

Membership

Metropolitan Water District of Southern California: Board Member (1992-1999); Vice-Chair of the Board (1994-1998); Chair, Water Policy and Audit Committees; Vice-Chair, Engineering and Operations Committee
San Diego County Water Authority: Board Member (1987-1999); Chair of the Board (1997-1998); Chair, Water Policy, Finance and Imported Water Committees