

OF COUNSEL

Brandon Kline

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📍 Sacramento



Brandon A. Kline is of counsel and a member of the Environmental & Natural Resources and Municipal Law practice groups at Best Best & Krieger LLP (BBK). A skilled litigator, Brandon advises and defends clients in matters involving environmental and commercial litigation, premises liability, product defects and toxic tort defense. Brandon also serves as general counsel for corporate and non-profit clients.

Environmental Litigation

Brandon assists clients with all aspects of the California Environmental Quality Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, and related environmental laws. He comes to BBK from a San Francisco-based firm where he regularly litigated environmental and land use matters for large development renewable projects. Brandon also gained significant experience as deputy attorney general for the Department of Justice, Office of the Attorney General in Sacramento, where he represented large public entities in all phases of complex civil litigation. In addition, he regularly handled California Public Records Act issues on behalf of the Department of Justice.

Land Use/Higher Education

Brandon has accumulated extensive knowledge in legal and higher education policy matters through his years of serving in senior leadership positions within both the University of California and California State University systems. While in-house counsel at San Francisco State University, he skillfully managed CEQA reviews and secured CSU Trustees' approval for the campus master plan. Additionally, Brandon played a pivotal role in drafting numerous environmental documents and CEQA exemptions related to campus construction projects, several of which have been recognized for their sustainability and innovation achievements.

Furthermore, Brandon provided valuable guidance to SF State in the development and execution of public-private partnerships (PPPs), which ultimately facilitated the construction of additional campus housing. Beyond his legal responsibilities at SF State, Brandon co-taught courses and shared his legal insights with students, focusing on legislative developments within the housing crisis and other developmental challenges that government agencies, counties, and special districts encounter.

CORE PRACTICES

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

California Public Records Act

Environmental Law & Natural Resources

Land Use, Planning & Zoning

Municipal Law

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

In addition to his legal work, Brandon is developing the next generation of attorneys as an visiting professor of law at the University of California, Davis School of Law, where he teaches an upper division course on land use planning and CEQA. He co-founded and currently serves as general counsel to the Rebound Institute, a non-profit dedicated to helping formerly incarcerated students with housing, employment, legal support, life-skills training, and education. As part of his work with the Rebound Institute, Brandon successfully obtained grant funding to support the acquisition of property for the organization.

During his time in law school, Brandon actively engaged in moot court competitions and excelled as a national champion in environmental negotiations. He also served as President of the Black Law Students Association and interned as a summer law clerk in the Governor's Office of Planning and Research. While at OPR, he drafted technical advisories explaining the CEQA guidelines for infill projects. Brandon also served as a certified law clerk in the US Attorney's Office, District of Oregon, where he handled all aspects of civil litigation, including, prosecutions related to the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Federal Insecticide, Pesticide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), in addition to financial litigation matters arising under the Bank Secrecy Act. In 2015, Brandon's exceptional legal scholarship in the field of US energy independence earned him the distinction of being named a Presidential Leadership Scholar by former US Presidents Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and George H. W. Bush. He continues to contribute legal scholarship advocating for improvements to federal laws, including the Clean Air Act and the Congressional Review Act.

Prior to law school, Brandon was a California Executive Fellow in the Office of Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. In his free time, Brandon serves on the Vacaville Planning Commission. An enthusiastic runner, he also finds joy in coaching youth basketball.

Accolades

- Presidential Leadership Scholar, 2015
- Cornelius Honor Society, Lewis & Clark Law School, 2015
- Champion, Merhige Environmental Negotiation Competition, 2014

Professional & Community Involvement

- American Bar Association, Member
- Bar Association of San Francisco, Member
- California Association of Black Lawyers, Member
- Environmental Law Institute, Member
- Sacramento Bar Association, Member
- San Francisco Bay Area Planning and Urban Research Association, Member
- The State Bar of California, Member

EDUCATION & ADMISSIONS

Education

Lewis & Clark Law School, J.D. and LL.M, environmental, natural resources and energy law, Cornelius Honor Society

California State University, Sacramento, B.A., government and economics, with honors

Bar Admissions

California

Washington

Court Admissions

U.S. Court of Appeals Ninth Circuit

U.S. District Court Central District of California

U.S. District Court Eastern District of California

U.S. District Court Northern District of California

U.S. District Court Southern District of California

- Washington State Bar Association, Member

Thought Leadership

Publications

- “CA Supreme Court’s Ruling in Make UC a Good Neighbor is a Turning Point for CEQA and Student Housing Projects,” *CEB Daily News*, Aug. 30, 2024
- “State Supreme Court sides with legislature, UC Regents -- people are not pollution under CEQA,” *Daily Journal*, July 1, 2024
- “State Supreme Court Must Decide Whether People are Pollution Under CEQA,” *Daily Journal*, Mar. 18, 2024
- “Social Noise is not an Environmental Impact Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).” *Daily Journal*, *California Lawyer*, Sept. 2023
- Co-Author, “Reforming the Congressional Review Act,” Harvard Environmental Law Program, Spring 2018
- “On Climate Change, Capital Markets and Securities Disclosures,” Lewis & Clark Law School, Green Energy Institute, Feb. 14, 2016
- “Clean Air Act Series, Part IV; Regulatory Loophole Won’t Save VW - On the Road to Cleaner Air: Jail Time for White-Collar Violators?” Lewis & Clark Law School, Green Energy Institute, Jan. 29, 2016
- “Clean Air Act Series, Part III; Regulatory Carve Out Poses Challenge to VW Criminal Case,” Lewis & Clark Law School, Green Energy Institute, Jan. 22, 2016
- “Clean Air Act Series, Part II; Legal Expert: Prosecuting White-Collar Violators Incentivizes Regulatory Compliance,” Lewis & Clark Law School, Green Energy Institute, Dec. 7, 2015
- “Clean Air Act Series, Part I; How does a 'Defeat Device' operate and why does it matter?” Lewis & Clark Law School, Green Energy Institute, Dec. 1, 2015
- “Crime Shouldn’t Pay: Dispelling Common Myths About Federal Civil Asset Forfeiture.” *Multnomah Lawyer*, Fall 2015
- “On ExxonMobil: When is a Company Liable for What it Says (or Doesn’t Say) About Climate Change Risks?” Lewis & Clark Law School, Green Energy Institute, Nov. 17, 2015
- “White House Rejection of Keystone Embraces U.S. Leadership Role in Tackling Climate Change,” Lewis & Clark Law School, Green Energy Institute, Nov. 9, 2015
- “Pursuing Zero Waste Goals Closes the Loop: The Logic, Law and Business of Recycling,” Lewis & Clark Law School, Green Energy Institute, Nov. 3, 2015
- “My Introduction to Negotiating Renewable Energy Policy,” Lewis & Clark Law School, Green Energy Institute, Oct. 26, 2015
- “Green Defaults Help Consumers Choose Renewable Future,” Lewis & Clark Law School, Green Energy Institute, Oct. 7, 2015
- “Drought Dries Up California’s Hydropower but Not its Vision for a Renewable Energy Future,” Lewis & Clark Law School, Green Energy Institute, Sept. 21, 2015
- “Technical Advisory on Local Groundwater Management,” Governor’s Office of Planning & Research, Sacramento, CA., Aug. 2014
- “Technical Advisory on Infill Development Exceptions Under the CEQA,” Governor’s Office of Planning & Research, Sacramento, CA., Sept. 2014

Presentations

- Panelist, California Association of Environmental Professionals CEQA Essentials Workshop, Nov. 14, 2024

- “California Supreme Court Review: Make UC A Good Neighbor v. Regents of the University of California,” Continuing Education of the Bar, California Supreme Court Review Series, Aug. 16, 2024
- California Association of Environmental Professionals Advanced CEQA Workshop, Feb. 8, 2024
- “Land Use Planning and the California Environmental Quality Act,” LAW 256, University of California, Davis School of Law, King Hall, 2023-present
- “Environmental Impact Analysis,” Geography 652 - CEQA, San Francisco State University, Course Lecturer, 2019 – 2020
- “Astronomers for Planet Earth: Action for a Habitable World,” Astronomical Society of the Pacific, 100th Annual Meeting, San Francisco, 2019