

Willis Hon

Partner | San Francisco

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Willis Hon focuses on serving water industry clients across California on a broad range of administrative and regulatory matters. He has extensive experience before the California Public Utilities Commission where he has participated in a number of ratesetting, adjudicatory, and rulemaking proceedings on behalf of water utility companies, industry associations, and regional transportation agencies. He also provides legal counseling and governance advice to public agencies on regulatory compliance issues, including matters relating to the Brown Act and public procurement laws.

Willis has written and presented on climate change resilience and adaptation matters, with a particular expertise on recent legislation addressing wildfire risks and the doctrine of inverse condemnation. He also has experience representing clients in federal court and before administrative agencies on environmental law matters involving the Clean Water Act and local air quality regulations.

Prior to joining Nossaman, Willis was an associate at a boutique environmental law firm in New York City, where he worked on federal and state environmental litigation and advised clients in regulatory investigations. He also served as a law clerk with the U.S. Department of Justice, Environment and Natural Resources Division, Law and Policy Section.

EXPERIENCE

California Water Association. Represents the statewide association of investor-owned water utilities regulated by the California Public Utilities Commission and the State Water Resources Control Board in proceedings relevant to low-income programs, affordability issues, and other policy matters impacting the delivery of safe, reliable water service at reasonable rates.

Water Utility Companies. Represents multiple water utility companies in California in adjudicatory and rate setting matters (including general rate cases and cost of capital proceedings) and provides counseling on novel issues affecting public utility service from new legislation.

San Francisco County Transportation Authority. Member of team that serves as General Counsel to the Authority, which administers and oversees the delivery of the local transportation sales tax program to fund major transportation infrastructure projects.

Automobile Parts Yard. Member of team that represents a client that sells used automobile parts in a federal court citizen action suit involving claims under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) and common law environment tort claims relating to allegations of groundwater contamination.

Solvent Recycling Facility. Member of team that represents a client that operates a solvent recycling and resource recovery facility in a hazardous waste enforcement action by the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC).

Manufacturing Company. Member of team that represented client in an Order of Abatement hearing before the South Coast Air Quality Management District regarding air emissions and in a Clean Water Act citizen suit relating to allegations of stormwater pollution.

INSIGHTS

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

Speaker, "Taking the Plunge: Lessons Learned from Water System Consolidations," Nossaman's 2021 Water Webinar Series, 03.23.2021

Speaker, "Inverse Condemnation Exposure and Management for the Energy Industry," 2020 American Association of Professional Landmen Annual Meeting, 06.18.2020

Moderator, "Legal Practice Before the California Public Utilities Commission in an Era of Transition," Young Utility Lawyers' Section of Conference of California Public Utilities Counsel (CCPUC) 2020 Summer Virtual Practice and Procedure CLE, 06.17.2020

Speaker, "Water, Power & Fire: Coordination, Resiliency and Liability in 2020," Nossaman's 2020 Water Webinar Series, 02.26.2020

Moderator, "After the Fire: Navigating Post-Wildfire Water Contamination Challenges," Association of California Water Agencies 2019 Fall Conference & Exhibition, San Diego, CA, 12.04.2019

Speaker, "The Emerging PFAS Framework: Testing, Reporting, and Response Obligations for Public Water Systems," Nossaman's 2019 Water Webinar Series, 10.30.2019

Moderator, "Handling the Heat: The Evolving Nature of Washington's Wildfires," Joint Nossaman/Environmental Law Institute (ELI) Live Webinar, Seattle, WA, 10.08.2019

Moderator, "Strategizing Against the Flame: What's Next for California's Wildfires?," Joint Nossaman/Environmental Law Institute (ELI) Live Webinar, Los Angeles, CA & Webinar, 06.12.2019

Speaker, "Preparedness, Relief, and Recovery: Developments in Disaster Management for California Water Providers," International Right of Way Association/Nossaman Webinar, Webinar, 05.15.2019

Speaker, "Preparedness, Relief, and Recovery: Regulatory Developments in Disaster Management for Water Providers," Nossaman's 2019 Water Webinar Series, 02.28.2019

PUBLICATIONS

Author, "The Future of Water Rights in California: Water Futures Trading," *Daily Journal*, 03.17.2021

Co-Author, "SolarWinds Cybersecurity Exploit: What Water Providers Need to Know and Do," *Nossaman eAlert*, 12.17.2020

Co-Author, "Power Shutoffs: What California Water Providers Should Know," *Daily Journal*, 11.19.2020

Co-Author, "The Water Resilience Portfolio: An Ambitious Blueprint for California Water in the Face of Climate Change," *Daily Journal*, 08.18.2020

Co-Author, "Companies Should Track Microplastic Research And Regulations," *Law360*, 08.05.2020

Co-Author, "U.S. Alternative Energy and Power Industry - Trends & Developments," *Chambers Alternative Energy & Power 2020 Guide*, 08.01.2020

Co-Author, "State Water Board Imposes Stricter Response Levels for PFOA and PFOS," *Nossaman eAlert*, 02.10.2020

Co-Author, "As California Burns, Inverse Condemnation and Cost Recovery Issues Dominate California's Electric Utilities' Legal Framework," *Daily Journal*, 11.07.2019

Co-Author, "California Supreme Court Provides Rare Update on Inverse Condemnation Doctrine," *Nossaman eAlert*, 08.16.2019

Co-Author, "Landmark Legislation Creates New Wildfire Fund and Overhauls California's Approach to Catastrophic Wildfires," *Nossaman eAlert*, 07.12.2019

Co-Author, "Reconsidering Strict Liability in Light of Recent California Wildfires," *Daily Journal*, 06.11.2019

Co-Author, "New De-Energization Guidelines Implemented Just in Time for the 2019 Wildfire Season," *Nossaman eAlert*, 06.11.2019

Co-Author, "New Tools & Sweeping Changes Proposed in Draft Wildfire Commission Report," *Nossaman eAlert*, 05.30.2019

Co-Author, "Governor Newsom Outlines Ambitious Strategy to Tackle Wildfires," *Nossaman eAlert*, 04.17.2019

Author, "Proposing a Statewide Low-Income Water Service Program for California?," *Nossaman eAlert*, 01.14.2019

Co-Author, "Governor Brown Signs Legislation on Wildfire Prevention & Recovery," *Nossaman eAlert*, 09.24.2018

HONORS & RECOGNITIONS

Included in *Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch for Administrative/Regulatory Law*, 2021-2023

COMMUNITY & PROFESSIONAL

Asian American Bar Association

California Minority Counsel Program

Water Education Foundation, Water Leaders Program, 2020

Conference of California Public Utility Counsel, Young Utilities Lawyers section, Co-Chair, 2020-2022

Bar Association of San Francisco

PRACTICES

Water Law

Environment & Land Use

Eminent Domain & Valuation

Water Utility Regulation

Climate Change & Resiliency

Environmental Litigation

Inverse Condemnation & Regulatory Takings

Public Agency Representation

Water Litigation

Water Quality

INDUSTRIES

Energy & Utilities

Public Utilities Regulation

Renewable & Alternative Energy

Water

EDUCATION

Columbia University School of Law, J.D., 2014

University of California, Berkeley, B.S., 2010, *with honors*

ADMISSIONS

California

New York

U.S. District Court, Northern District of California

U.S. District Court, Southern District of California

U.S. District Court, Central District of California

U.S. District Court, Eastern District of New York

U.S. District Court, Southern District of New York