

Sarah E. Peterson

Partner

San Francisco

Details

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Sarah Peterson handles complex litigation in civil and white-collar matters. Her specialty is appellate litigation. She has represented clients in the federal and California appellate courts and in the United States Supreme Court.

Sarah has broad experience representing corporate clients in all types of breach-of-contract and business disputes, from the pretrial stages through appeal. Her industry experience ranges from accounting, venture capital, and real-estate development, to Bay Area technology start-ups, gaming, and telecommunications. She has special knowledge of the substantive and procedural frameworks applicable in commercial and residential land-use litigation, and she has defended a number of development projects on writ challenges brought under the California Environmental Quality Act. Sarah also has extensive experience in criminal law and related matters in the federal courts. She has represented clients in securities-fraud and civil-forfeiture cases, and has defended individuals charged with federal crimes.

Before joining Coblentz, Sarah clerked for the Honorable A. Wallace Tashima on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit and for the Honorable Maxine M. Chesney on the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California. She was also an associate at a boutique environmental and energy firm in San Francisco, where she handled litigation and regulatory matters.

Sarah is admitted to practice in all of the California federal district courts, in the Ninth and Federal Circuits, and in the United States Supreme Court.

Sarah graduated from Harvard Law School magna cum laude, in the top ten percent of her class. While in law school, she interned at the U.S. Department of Justice and at the Natural Resources Defense Council in Washington, D.C. Before law school, Sarah was a congressional aide to a U.S. Senator. She earned her B.A. with high honors in politics and environmental science from the University of Virginia, where she was Phi Beta Kappa and an Echols Scholar.

Honors & Awards

Sarah was named to the 2026 *Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch® in America* for Commercial Litigation and Litigation – Real Estate. Sarah is recognized as a Northern California Rising Star by Super Lawyers in the Appellate, Business Litigation, and Land Use & Zoning categories.

Professional Activities

Sarah is admitted to practice in the Northern District of California, and in the Ninth and Federal Circuits.

Publications & Speaking Engagements

- [“Court Rulings Demonstrate SB 35’s Potential To Obtain Swift, Certain Approval Of Housing Developments”](#)

Education

- J.D., magna cum laude Harvard Law School (2015)
- B.A., with high honors University of Virginia (2011)