

## DISASTER LITIGATION



Decades of strategic case development and trial experience.

Across the country, communities are experiencing losses from wildfires, mudslides, earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, and other disasters. In addition to the tragic loss of life and property damage, these disasters bring a wide array of claims. WSHB has a proven track record of handling these claims effectively and efficiently.

### First-Party Coverage Claims

WSHB lawyers are skilled at navigating the complex regulatory and common law landscape of first-party insurance claims, and with their extensive experience defending such claims, can assist with the multitude of coverage related issues that arise from natural disasters.

### Subrogation and Other Third-Party Claims

WSHB's extensive record of handling subrogation cases includes defense of the largest municipal utility company in the nation for one of the largest fires in the nation, which burned over 30,000 acres and multiple structures in 2013. In addition, our attorneys have experience prosecuting large loss subrogation matters, having recovered millions of dollars for both domestic and international insurers in state and federal court. With respect to other third party claims, disaster litigation overlaps with WSHB's other areas of expertise, including personal injury, wrongful death, and professional negligence against insurance brokers and agents.

### Claims from Federal and State Governments

Both the state and federal government often seek recovery of disaster-related costs pursuant to various legal provisions. WSHB has knowledge and experience handling such claims, having successfully defended them at the state and federal level.

### EXPERIENCE

We have handled over 1,000 disaster-related claims over the past 25 years. Here is a small sampling:

#### PROFESSIONALS

Joseph M. Aguirre  
Gregory P. Arakawa  
Vincent P. Beilman III  
Daniel A. Berman  
Jonathan R. Hart  
Sebastian A. Larrea  
Colleen V. McCaffrey  
Graham B. Miller  
Trevor J. Peck  
Jeffery Rowe  
Richard M. Singer  
Michael D. Spinazzola  
Richard E. Zelonka, Jr.

## Disaster Litigation

- Defense of the largest municipal utility company in the nation for one of the largest fires in the nation, which burned over 30,000 acres and multiple structures in 2013
- Defense of 20 state court cases for property damage, lost profits, emotional distress, attorney's fees, and other claims arising out of the Copper Fire
- Defense of various claims pertaining to stormwater system failures in the Coachella Valley during monsoon storm events which resulted in mass flooding to entire communities
- Tried a 5-week trial pertaining to stormwater run-off and resultant sediment transfer from a mountain watershed to the Colorado River in Needles, CA
- Defense of claims arising from Hurricane Sandy, including issues concerning National Flood Insurance Program
- Defense of bad faith allegations stemming from coverage denials associated with wind-related losses
- Defense of bad faith lawsuit brought by dozens of homeowners against their insurance companies arising out of their declination of claims for claimed smoke damage allegedly arising out of wildfires dozens of miles away from homes.
- Defense of public entity client against multiple suits arising out of apartment complex fire, including claims for personal injuries, loss of personal property, and subrogation.
- Defense of professional liability case against insurance agent for fire investigation malpractice.
- Five MSJ Wins for Georgia  
2.3.23
- WSHB Trial Update: San Bernardino Jury Rejects Claims in Storm Water Nuisance Case  
12.9.15

### NEWS

- The Coastal Fire and What it Portends for the California Fire Season Ahead  
Publications, 5.15.22
- New California Wildlife Safety Regulations Impact Insurance Companies  
Article, 3.17.22

### EVENTS

- Navigating Ethical Challenges in Catastrophic Events  
Speaking Engagement, Fort Lauderdale, FL, 11.11.22
- When Fools Rush In: Don't Rush to Judgment on Storm Damage  
Events, Palm Desert, CA, 3.24.22

### PUBLICATIONS

- Predictions Point to Rough Hurricane Season Ahead  
Article, 5.31.22