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Fall CEQA Roundup: Significant Developments and a Preview of Coming Attractions

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The past year has been extraordinary activity in the realm of the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) – encompassing new legislation, proposed updates to the CEQA Guidelines, and an unprecedented number of CEQA cases being accepted for review by the California Supreme Court. Propelled by both the ongoing drought in California and the continuing deluge of CEQA litigation, the state is poised to experience significant changes in this far-reaching law.

Below we outline and summarize noteworthy legislative changes to CEQA, the draft CEQA Guidelines amendments from the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research, new regulations proposed by the Department of Fish and Wildlife that will impact project-specific CEQA reviews, and (briefly) each of the seven cases now pending before the California Supreme Court. This article is intended to present a broad overview and survey of some of these many significant CEQA developments, rather than an in-depth critique or analysis of their legal or policy merit.

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