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REAL ESTATE

CALIFORNIA'S TOP REAL ESTATE ATTORNEYS OF 2012



Tony Toranto

Sheppard, Mullin, Richter
& Hampton LLP

San Diego

Specialties: real estate acquisitions,
development, energy

Some of Toranto's biggest projects sit at the intersection of real estate and energy. Last summer, he helped close a nearly \$700 million financing deal for client NRG Energy Inc. to push forward the El Segundo Energy Center — an innovative, ongoing project in which the company plans to redevelop and “repower” its existing power plant site

in the city.

As part of the transaction, NRG executed a 10-year power purchase agreement with Southern California Edison to supply up to 550 megawatts of environmentally friendly electricity to more than 400,000 homes. NRG officials said the site revamp would include installing smaller equipment than at the previous plant and feature a new design to cut the use of ocean water for cooling.

“I handled a lot of real estate issues that impacted the [project] financing,” Toranto said. “My role was to help resolve those issues to help advance the project.”

Toranto's other recent projects include helping NRG in March close \$300 million in funding for Los Angeles County's first large-scale solar development, the 66-megawatt Alpine Solar Project in Lancaster.

Besides his energy-related work, Toranto's practice includes real estate acquisitions, development, leasing, financing and joint ventures and corporate matters. He's currently structuring a development and financing deal for three mixed-use condominium projects in San Francisco.

Toranto said one of his strengths is being able to understand his clients' businesses, as well as how legal issues affect them. Before becoming a lawyer, he worked for a major private equity group and was chief executive officer of a consumer diagnostics company.

“I know what it's like to do business and also be a consumer of legal services,” he said. “A lot of my relationships have started with helping [clients] with specific real estate transactions and have grown to become more like general counsel roles, too.”

— Jason W. Armstrong