

## LEGAL SERVICES AGREEMENT

This Agreement dated as of July 1, 2024 (“Effective Date”), is made by and between the Sonoma County Counsel’s Office on behalf of the County of Sonoma (“County”) and Sequoia Public Law (“Attorney”). This Agreement is required by Business and Professions Code Section 6148 and is intended to fulfill its requirements.

### RECITALS

WHEREAS, Attorney has significant experience and recognized legal expertise in land use, planning, environmental, administrative, constitutional, and general public law; and

WHEREAS, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors has authorized a legal services agreement for as-needed legal services to assist the County with land use, planning, environmental, administrative, constitutional, and general public law.

NOW THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual covenants contained herein, the parties agree as follows:

### AGREEMENT

1. Services. Attorney will furnish as-needed legal services to County with regard to the land use entitlement process, including review of environmental documents to ensure consistency with the California Environmental Policy Act (CEQA), and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), when applicable, and including administrative hearings and appeals. Services will also entail providing legal review and counsel for private applicant initiated projects, and complex public and public-private development projects, including environmental review for such projects, and defending the County in litigation, including CEQA and permit challenges related to decisions on specific projects. Services will also include legal support for one or more county long range comprehensive planning initiatives, including the County’s update of the general plan and various specific plans, as well as legal support for county zoning code and land use ordinance development, adoption, and implementation, including associated environmental review. Services will also include advising on matters of tribal law and tribal affairs, including but not limited to negotiating and performing under intergovernmental agreements, providing training, and advising on fee-to-trust, Indian gaming, and AB 52. Services will also include advising on general public law matters, including but not limited to the Brown Act, Public Records Act, contracts, conflicts, civil administrative enforcement, and legislative drafting. Attorneys understand and agree that the County itself is the client, acting by and through the Board of Supervisors. Attorney shall be prepared to and shall provide all requested legal services reasonably required to represent the County’s interests from initial project formulation and planning through to final project delivery and completion. Attorney shall always keep the County Counsel’s office adequately informed of the matters Attorney is handling, and will provide the County Counsel

with a draft of all deliverables as soon as possible to allow proper County Counsel review and input, and at least 48 hours before deadline. Attorney shall keep the County Counsel fully advised of the progress in each assigned matter. Attorney shall provide County Counsel with periodic updates, as may be appropriate.

County does not guarantee any amount or types of services, or any duration of services. All services shall be on an as-needed basis as determined by County in County's sole discretion. County will confirm all assignments in writing.

2. Compensation. Compensation to Attorney for respective services shall be at a rate of \$210.00 per hour for fiscal year 2024-25; provided, however, that total payments hereunder shall not exceed \$350,000 per year. The rates set forth herein shall not be adjusted without a formal amendment to this Agreement.
3. Term. The term of this Agreement shall be from the Effective Date to June 30, 2025, with two one-year extension options, unless otherwise terminated or amended as provided herein. County will notify Attorney at least 60 days prior to expiration of its intent to exercise its option to extend the Agreement.
4. Attorneys' Key Personnel. The parties identified in this section as the key legal personnel providing professional services under this Agreement are key persons, whose services are a material inducement to County to enter into this Agreement. Key personnel shall be as listed below: Sita Kuteira.
5. Standard of Care. County Counsel has relied on the professional ability, professional experience, and training of Attorney as a material inducement to enter into this Agreement. Attorney warrants that all work will be performed in accordance with generally accepted and applicable professional practices and standards as well as the requirements of applicable federal, state and local laws, it being understood that acceptance by County of work performed by Attorney shall not operate as or be interpreted to be a waiver or release.
6. Billing and Timekeeping. A billing statement shall be provided on a monthly basis, and shall include the following information:
  - a. The date and time spent performing services. Minimum billing times shall not exceed one-tenth of an hour.
  - b. Summary description of the services performed regarding the designated matter, with a separate time allocation for each function (e.g., telephone calls, research, drafting);
  - c. Separate itemization of non-legal costs by type.
  - d. Total fees and costs of the matter to date.

- e. For any extraordinary expenses, the invoice must include the date and who gave prior approval for incurring such expense.
- f. All invoices submitted must include the following statement signed by the firm's supervising attorney:

“I have personally examined this billing statement. All entries are in accordance with the Legal Services Agreement, are correct and reasonable for the services performed and the costs incurred, and no item on this statement has been previously billed to the County.”

- 7. Non-Reimbursable Services. Attorney shall not be reimbursed for any of the following expenses:
  - a. Travel expenses, except if approved in accordance with Section 8 below.
  - b. Travel time, except if approved in accordance with Section 8 below.
  - c. Unnecessary messenger or express mail charges.
  - d. Normal overhead functions such as word processing or typing time, scheduling of depositions, ordering records, calendaring functions, filing, indexing, proofreading or copying time, or any other procedures that are of a secretarial nature.
  - e. Meals, overtime, office supplies, or attorney time for preparation of bills or audit responses.
  - f. Expenses for experts or attorneys that have been retained without the prior written approval of County Counsel.
  - g. Photocopying charges in excess of \$25.00 in any billing cycle without prior written approval of County Counsel.
  - h. Office supplies, local telephone charges, per-page fax charges, conference call line charges, routine mail, etc.
  - i. Intra-office conferencing time of more than one attorney for routine matters, unless such conference involves expert opinion.
  - j. Replacement attorney learning time or other ramp-up learning costs.
  - k. Charges/fees for use of computer research programs (e.g. Lexis Nexis, WestLaw, etc.).

8. Direction and Extraordinary Expenses. All direction and control of Attorney's work will be by the Sonoma County Counsel's Office and in conjunction with Chief Deputy County Counsel Jennifer C. Klein, County Counsel representative. Attorney shall seek pre-approval from the County Counsel's Office for all extraordinary expenses before the same is incurred by Attorney. By way of example, extraordinary expenses shall include expenses for preparing complex legal documents, undertaking significant legal research or substantial drafting, retaining experts and attorneys, and out-of-town travel.
9. Termination. This Agreement may be terminated by County Counsel at any time, subject to equitable proportional payments due to Attorney. All files, written material, and documents will be transferred to the County Counsel upon such termination. Attorney will be available to consult with County Counsel or, should one be retained, with the County's new attorney with respect to facts and circumstances of any matters previously worked on by Attorney for a reasonable period of time following such termination. Termination by Attorney is permitted in the event of withdrawal under Section 10 of this Agreement.
10. Withdrawal. Attorney may withdraw as permitted under the Rules of Professional Conduct of the State Bar of California.
11. No Suspension or Debarment. Attorney warrants that it is not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in covered transactions by any federal department or agency. Attorney also warrants that it is not suspended or debarred from receiving federal funds as listed in the List of Parties Excluded from Federal Procurement or Non-procurement Programs issued by the General Services Administration. If the Attorney becomes debarred, Attorney has the obligation to inform the County.
12. Status of Attorney. The parties intend that Attorney, in performing the services under this Agreement, shall be an independent contractor and shall control the work and the manner in which it is performed. Attorney shall acquire no rights or status in the service of County. Attorney is not to be considered an agent or employee of County and is not entitled to participate in any pension plan, insurance, bonus, or similar benefits County provides its employees. In the event County Counsel exercises its right to terminate this Agreement pursuant to the terms herein, Attorney expressly agrees that Attorney shall have no recourse or right of appeal under rules, regulations, ordinances, or laws applicable to employees.
13. Modification. If, during the term of this Agreement, it becomes necessary to amend or add to its terms, conditions, scope or requirements, such amendment or addition shall only be made after mutual agreement of Attorney and County Counsel and by way of execution of a written modification to this Agreement.
14. Insurance. With respect to performance of work under this Agreement, Attorney shall maintain and require all of its subcontractors, Attorneys, and other agents to maintain,

insurance as described in Exhibit A, which is attached hereto and incorporated herein, by this reference.

15. Indemnity. Attorney agrees to accept responsibility for loss or damage to any person or entity, and to defend, indemnify, hold harmless, and release County, its officers, agents, and employees, from and against any and all actions, claims, damages, liabilities, or expenses that may be asserted by any person or entity, including Attorney, arising out of or in connection with errors or omissions by Attorney, or the negligent performance or willful misconduct of Attorney hereunder, whether or not there is concurrent negligence on the part of County, but to the extent required by law, excluding liability due to County's conduct. This indemnification obligation is not limited in any way by any limitation on the amount or type of damages or compensation payable to or for Attorney or its agents under workers' compensation acts, disability benefits acts, or other employee benefit acts.
16. Rules of Professional Conduct. Nothing contained herein shall be construed to relieve Attorney of Attorney's obligations under the Rules of Professional Conduct.
17. Merger. This Agreement contains the entire agreement of the parties. No other agreement, statement or promise made on or before the Effective Date and relating to appellate representation in the underlying matter will be binding on the parties.
18. Taxes. Attorney agrees to file federal and state tax returns and pay all applicable taxes on amounts paid pursuant to this Agreement and shall be solely liable and responsible to pay such taxes and other obligations, including, but not limited to, state and federal income and FICA taxes. Attorney agrees to indemnify and hold County harmless from any liability which it may incur to the United States or to the State of California as a consequence of Attorney's failure to pay, when due, all such taxes and obligations. If County is audited for compliance regarding any withholding or other applicable taxes, Attorney agrees to furnish the County with proof of payment of taxes on these earnings.
19. Conflict of Interest. Attorney covenants that Attorney presently has no interest and shall not acquire any interest, direct or indirect, which would conflict in any manner or degree with the performance of the services hereunder. Where County deems that there is an actual or potential conflict of interest in Attorney representing another party in a matter, County must waive any such actual or potential conflict in writing before Attorney may represent such other party. Attorney reported no known conflicts as of the effective date of this Agreement. Attorneys will disclose any new representations of parties in Sonoma County to County Counsel and consult with him about any actual or potential conflicts or concerns that might arise before undertaking those new representations. The disclosure requirement herein extends only to matters involving the County of Sonoma, and the Sonoma County Water Agency, and Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, which share the same governing board.

20. Nondiscrimination. Attorney shall comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules and regulations in regard to nondiscrimination in employment because of race, color, ancestry, national origin, religion, sex, marital status, age, medical condition, pregnancy, disability, sexual orientation, or other prohibited basis, including without limitation the County's Non-Discrimination Policy. All nondiscrimination rules or regulations required by law to be included in this Agreement are incorporated by this reference.
21. Assignment and Delegation. Neither party hereto shall assign, delegate, sublet, or transfer any interest in or duty under this Agreement without the prior written consent of the other, and no such transfer shall be of any force or effect whatsoever unless and until the other party shall have so consented.
22. Method and Place of Giving Notice, Submitting Bills and Making Payments. All notices, bills, and payments shall be made in writing and may be given by personal delivery or by mail, except that bills may be submitted electronically. Notices, bills, and payments sent by mail shall be addressed as follows:

County: Jennifer C. Klein, Chief Deputy  
Office of County Counsel  
County of Sonoma  
Office of the County Counsel  
575 Administration Drive, Rm 105A  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403-2881

Electronic Bill Submission:

[Jennifer.klein@sonoma-county.org](mailto:Jennifer.klein@sonoma-county.org)

With cc: to:

[Kelli.logasa@sonoma-county.org](mailto:Kelli.logasa@sonoma-county.org)

Attorney: Sita Kuteira, Director  
Sequoia Public Law  
2108 N St. Ste. N  
Sacramento, CA 95816

And when so addressed, shall be deemed given upon deposit in the United States mail, postage prepaid. In all other instances, notices, bills, and payments shall be deemed given at the time of actual delivery. Changes may be made in the names and addresses of the person to whom notices, bills, and payments are to be given by giving notice pursuant to this paragraph.

23. No Waiver of Breach. The waiver by the County of any breach of any term or promise contained in this Agreement shall not be deemed to be a waiver of such term or

promise or any subsequent breach of the same or any other term or promise contained in this Agreement.

24. Applicable Law and Forum. This Agreement shall be construed and interpreted according to California Law, and any action or proceeding to enforce this Agreement or for the breach thereof shall be brought or tried in the County of Sonoma.

25. AIDS Discrimination. Attorney agrees to comply with the provisions of Article II of Chapter 19 of the Sonoma County Code, prohibiting discrimination in housing, employment, and services because of AIDS or HIV infection during the term of this Agreement and any extensions of the term.

26. Statutory Compliance/Living Wage Ordinance. Attorney agrees to comply with, and to ensure compliance with from its subcontractors, all applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations, statutes and policies – including but not limited to the County of Sonoma Living Wage Ordinance-- applicable to the services provided under this Agreement as they exist now and as they are changed, amended or modified during the term of this Agreement. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, Attorney expressly acknowledges and agrees that this Agreement may be subject to the provisions of Article XXVI of Chapter 2 of the Sonoma County Code, requiring payment of a living wage to covered employees. Noncompliance during the term of the Agreement will be considered a material breach and may result in termination of the Agreement or pursuit of other legal or administrative remedies.

27. Counterparts. This Agreement may be executed in several counterparts and all counterparts so executed shall constitute one agreement that shall be binding on all of the parties, notwithstanding that all of the parties are not signatory to the original or same counterpart.

**[Remainder of page intentionally left blank.]**

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have executed this Agreement as of the Effective Date.

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_

Attorney:  
Sequoia Public Law

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name:  
Title:

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_

Sonoma County Counsel's Office

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Robert Pittman  
Sonoma County Counsel

APPROVED AS TO FUNDS FOR COUNTY:

\_\_\_\_\_

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

CERTIFICATES OF INSURANCE ON  
FILE WITH AND APPROVED  
BY:

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chief Deputy County Counsel

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_



## EXHIBIT A

### INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

With respect to performance of work under this Agreement, Attorney shall maintain and shall require all of its subcontractors, subconsultants, and other agents to maintain insurance as described below. Any requirement for insurance to be maintained after completion of the work shall survive this Agreement.

County reserves the right to review any and all of the required insurance policies and/or endorsements, but has no obligation to do so. Failure to demand evidence of full compliance with the insurance requirements set forth in this Agreement or failure to identify any insurance deficiency shall not relieve Attorney from, nor be construed or deemed a waiver of, its obligation to maintain the required insurance at all times during the performance of this Agreement.

**a. Workers Compensation and Employers Liability Insurance**

- b.** Required if Attorney has employees as defined by the Labor Code of the State of California.
- c.** Workers Compensation insurance with statutory limits as required by the Labor Code of the State of California.
- d.** Employers Liability with minimum limits of \$100,000 per Accident; \$100,000 per employee; \$500,000 per policy.
- e.** Required Evidence of Insurance: Certificate of Insurance.

If Attorney currently has no employees as defined by the Labor Code of the State of California, Attorney agrees to obtain the above-specified Workers Compensation and Employers Liability insurance should employees be engaged during the term of this Agreement or any extensions of the term.

**f. Automobile Liability Insurance**

- a.** Minimum Limit: \$1,000,000 combined single limit per accident. The required limits may be provided by a combination of Automobile Liability Insurance and Commercial Excess or Commercial Umbrella Liability Insurance.
- b.** Insurance shall cover all owned autos. If Attorney currently owns no autos, Attorney agrees to obtain such insurance should any autos be acquired during the term of this Agreement or any extensions of the term.
- c.** If Attorney only uses rental cars for services under this Agreement, Attorney will purchase or maintain insurance consistent with this section for each rental period.
- d.** Insurance shall cover hired and non-owned autos.
- e.** Required Evidence of Insurance: Certificate of Insurance or other proof of insurance for rental cars.

**g. Professional Liability/Errors and Omissions Insurance**

- a.** Minimum Limits: \$100,000 per claim or per occurrence; \$300,000 annual aggregate.
- b.** Any deductible or self-insured retention shall be shown on the Certificate of

Insurance. If the deductible or self-insured retention exceeds \$25,000 it must be approved in advance by County.

- c. If Attorney's services include: (1) programming, customization, or maintenance of software; or (2) access to individuals' private, personally identifiable information, the insurance shall cover:
  - i. Breach of privacy; breach of data; programming errors, failure of work to meet contracted standards, and unauthorized access; and
  - ii. Claims against Attorney arising from the negligence of Attorney, Attorney's employees and Attorney's subcontractors.
- d. If the insurance is on a Claims-Made basis, the retroactive date shall be no later than the commencement of the work.
- e. Coverage applicable to the work performed under this Agreement shall be continued for two (2) years after completion of the work. Such continuation coverage may be provided by one of the following: (1) renewal of the existing policy; (2) an extended reporting period endorsement; or (3) replacement insurance with a retroactive date no later than the commencement of the work under this Agreement.
- f. Required Evidence of Insurance: Certificate of Insurance specifying the limits and the claims-made retroactive date.

**h. Standards for Insurance Companies**

Insurers, other than the California State Compensation Insurance Fund, shall have an A.M. Best's rating of at least A:VII.

**i. Documentation**

- a. The Certificate of Insurance must include the following reference: N/A.
- b. All required Evidence of Insurance shall be submitted prior to the execution of this Agreement. Attorney agrees to maintain current Evidence of Insurance on file with County for the entire term of this Agreement and any additional periods if specified in Sections 1 – 4 above.
- c. The name and address for Additional Insured endorsements and Certificates of Insurance is: Sonoma County Counsel's Office – 575 Administration Drive, Suite 105A, Santa Rosa, CA 95404.
- d. Required Evidence of Insurance shall be submitted for any renewal or replacement of a policy that already exists, at least ten (10) days before expiration or other termination of the existing policy.
- e. Attorney shall provide immediate written notice if: (1) any of the required insurance policies is terminated; (2) the limits of any of the required policies are reduced; or (3) the deductible or self-insured retention is increased.
- f. Upon written request, certified copies of required insurance policies must be provided within thirty (30) days.

**j. Policy Obligations**

Attorney's indemnity and other obligations shall not be limited by the foregoing insurance requirements.

**k. Material Breach**

If Attorney fails to maintain insurance which is required pursuant to this Agreement, it shall be deemed a material breach of this Agreement. County, at its sole option, may terminate this Agreement and obtain damages from Attorney resulting from said breach. Alternatively, County may purchase the required insurance, and without further notice to Attorney, County may deduct from sums due to Attorney any premium costs advanced by County for such insurance. These remedies shall be in addition to any other remedies available to County.

DRAFT