

# Cozen O'Connor's Construction Group Continues its U.S. Buildout With a Major Expansion into Southern California

**Monday, March 18, 2024**

**LOS ANGELES, March 18, 2024** — Cozen O'Connor today announced it has further expanded its international Construction Law practice — this time into California — by adding six of the state's leading construction attorneys to its Los Angeles office. The six attorneys, which include Marion T. Hack, Luke Nicholas Eaton, Michelle Rosenberg, John H. Conrad, Cindy J. Lee, and Venessa Drake, come to the firm from Troutman Pepper. Collectively, they represent more than seven decades of front-line construction industry experience.

"Today's construction clients need and want experienced counsel, lawyers who can leverage their skill set to deliver cost-efficiency, creativity, and solutions that work," said Michael J. Heller, Cozen O'Connor's Executive Chairman and Chief Executive Officer. "This is a legal team that not only knows construction law, but California's construction industry — the key players, the economics, culture, issues, and stumbling blocks. They're an ideal fit to expand our Construction practice to the West Coast and I'm thrilled they've chosen to join us."

A first-chair trial attorney with a history of handling multimillion-dollar claim disputes involving high-profile, complex construction projects, Hack joins the firm as a shareholder and will lead the Los Angeles-based construction team. A fellow of the American College of Construction Lawyers and recognized as a leading Band 1 construction attorney by Chambers USA, she focuses her practice on an array of construction industry matters — including bidding disputes, contract negotiations and drafting, scheduling and delay issues, mechanics lien, and claims resolution at both the state and federal level. Her many successes include representing two of the world's largest global construction design/consulting firms to soundly defeat a \$100 million breach of contract claim, achieving a unanimous award of nearly \$5 million for her clients in a jury trial lasting three months. Hack previously worked with Bruce Ficken, co-chair of Cozen O'Connor's Construction Law practice.

"Being a part of Cozen O'Connor and being able to access its many legal resources — including its government relations, finance, contracts, and labor and employment professionals — will certainly benefit our construction clients," said Hack. "It's exciting to be here and we're all looking forward to helping grow this practice further, both in California and beyond."

"Having established seasoned construction litigation practices in Philadelphia, Washington, New York, Boston, and Miami, establishing a similar presence in California has long been a priority, if we could find the right fit. But to do this in the form of a reunion of like-minded construction lawyers with whom we have worked with and already count as friends, is beyond anything I might have hoped for," said Ficken. "We know the culture, professionalism, and reputation of both groups are totally compatible. Indeed national clients who we both respect, have already reached out to Marion and us to say how thrilled they are that Marion's group and Cozen O'Connor have joined forces."

Eaton, who joins the firm as a member, focuses his practice on complex construction and business disputes, representing clients in both litigation and arbitration. He represents domestic and foreign companies, private owners, developers, contractors, subcontractors, distributors, suppliers, in a variety of matters. He brings to the firm a track record of zealous advocacy and successfully handling and evaluating construction claims, including mechanics lien, stop payment notice and payment bond claims, while also advising clients on how to pursue and/or avoid such claims. Eaton received the 2021 Law360 Rising Star Award, which recognizes attorneys under 40 who are "practicing at a

## Related Practice Areas

- Construction Law

level usually seen from veteran attorneys."

Rosenberg joins as a member and concentrates on representing clients in pre-lawsuit claims procedures, litigation, and arbitration. She has represented architects, engineers, contractors, and owners in private and public works projects. Her track record also includes experience handling complex construction claims, including delay and disruption, payment, government contract, construction defect, and errors and omissions claims. She's been cited by Best Lawyers in America®: Ones to Watch: Construction Law (2024); and recognized as a Super Lawyers®: "Rising Star," California (2023)

Conrad, who joins as of counsel, has more than 30 years of experience in engineering design, construction project management, and representing major clients in construction litigation. A licensed civil engineer, Conrad focuses his practice on construction litigation matters, evaluating claims, analyzing construction defects, and mediating disputes, and litigation proceedings, including arbitrations, bench trials, and jury trials. He is a Legal Committee member of the Construction Management Association of America, certified cost engineer with the American Society of Cost Engineers, and an international member of the Association of General Contractors.

Lee joins as an associate and brings construction industry experience in both courtroom litigation and dispute resolution. She has represented a variety of contractors and design professionals in complex construction disputes in the private and public works context, in both state and federal courts. Lee's practice also includes pursuing and defending commercial collection efforts, including mechanics lien, stop payment notices, and payment bond claims. She is a member of the American Bar Association's Forum on Construction Law and a 2023 alumni of the ABA Construction Forum's Trial Academy.

Drake, who joins the firm as an associate, represents construction clients in state and federal court in matters involving labor and employment, health care, business litigation, and construction law. A member of Professional Women in Construction, she brings experience in depositions, witness preparation, discovery, and drafting motions and depositions. Most recently she served as second chair during a successful seven-day jury trial in the Los Angeles County Superior Court.

## About Cozen O'Connor

Established in 1970, Cozen O'Connor has over 925 attorneys who help clients manage risk and make better business decisions. The firm counsels clients on their most sophisticated legal matters in all areas of the law, including litigation, corporate, and regulatory law. Representing a broad array of leading global corporations and middle market companies, Cozen O'Connor serves its clients' needs through 33 offices across two continents.

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