

January 17, 2019  
San Diego, California

In 2016, without any prior notice or correspondence, I received by certified mail a Draft Cleanup and Abatement Order from the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board. The Board gave me 30 days to reply why I was not liable for cleaning up property that was allegedly contaminated by a dry cleaner from 1950 to 1958 on property I purchased in 1979 without any notice the property was contaminated, and sold in 1986, still not knowing that the property had ever been contaminated.

Being a retired attorney, I knew two things for sure. First, that there was no limit to the time and expense that Order could wreak upon me if entered; and second, that I immediately needed an attorney very well qualified in this area of environmental law. I researched, got recommendations from attorneys I knew, and had brief telephonic conferences and correspondence with at least six different attorneys, all of whom specialized in environmental law.

Two of the attorneys thought there was no defense to the order, as I had owned the property while it was contaminated. They suggested I not go to the expense of replying to the draft and just try later to minimize the cleanup costs. Two other attorneys were only slightly more optimistic.

When I first spoke to Jennifer, I immediately noticed she both listened and spoke carefully about my case. The communication with her was excellent. She said it is difficult to win these cases but knew of some recent decisions she could use to make the strongest showing possible and possibly prevail.

To make a long story short, she did exactly that. In 2018, we received the Water Board's final Cleanup Order – and I was not named in it. The Water Board had accepted Jennifer's legal arguments completely.

What I learned and liked about Jennifer during the almost two years of our case:

1. She knows the area of environmental law involved in my case better than any of the other attorneys I interviewed.
2. She is a good listener, willing to consider, discuss, explain, and answer all questions and suggestions from her client.
3. She explains arcane legal issues to the client and the Water Board well and thoroughly.
4. She responds quickly to requests from her client for information or communication.
5. Her hourly rates and fees are fair, and less than the median rates and fees of other attorneys I learned of.
6. She gives honest cost estimates and sticks to them.
7. She cares personally as well as professionally about her clients and their cases.
8. She is an effective attorney. She won a case for me that no other attorney I interviewed thought could be won.

I did not learn anything about Jennifer or her performance that I did not like or that made me regret in any way selecting and retaining her.

I hope other people and companies faced with the difficult task of selecting an attorney for a case anything like mine finds this info helpful.