

## DEFENSE VERDICT IN LANDOWNER CIVIL RIGHTS CASE

August 2007

Following a three-week jury trial, attorneys Dennis Cota and Derek Cole obtained a defense verdict in a federal civil rights case brought by a landowner against Madera County. The plaintiff, who owned nearly 4,000 acres of property near Yosemite, had sought \$100 million in damages and claimed violations of his equal protection and due process rights. The plaintiff claimed the County had improperly enforced development, building, and grading codes against him. A unanimous jury disagreed.

The case is entitled *Ernest Merrill, et al. v. County of Madera, etc., et al.*, United States District Court for the Eastern District of California, Fresno Division, Case No. CIV F-05-0195 AWI SMS.