

NMVB 50th Anniversary Industry Roundtable



Keynote Speaker

Toks Omishakin, Secretary

California State Transportation Agency

Toks Omishakin was appointed the 4th Secretary of Transportation for the state of California by Governor Gavin Newsom in February of 2022. As Secretary of the California State Transportation Agency (CALSTA), he has oversight of 8 State Departments, Boards and Commissions that, combined, have more than 42,000 people and a budget that exceeds \$30 billion annually. Safety, Equity, Climate Action, and Economic Prosperity—the Core Four—are the top transportation priorities established for the state. Prior to his appointment as Secretary, he was Director of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) where, as the chief executive of the department, he managed a \$17.5 billion budget and more than 22,000 employees that oversee 50,000 lane miles of highways, maintain more than 20,000 bridges, provide permitting of more than 250 public-use airports, fund 3 of Amtrak’s busiest intercity rail services and provide transit support to more than 400 local and regional transit agencies. In 2020, he and the Caltrans executive team established a new strategic direction for the department prioritizing partnerships and community engagement to accomplish its goals to create a cleaner, safer, more equitable and connected transportation system for California.

Omishakin came to Caltrans following eight years as Deputy Commissioner with the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT). There, he successfully established environmental and multimodal local and national groundbreaking planning policies and programs, including a new Multimodal Access Grant program and new Office of Community Transportation.

Moderator



Tim Corcoran, Executive Director California New Motor Vehicle Board

Executive Director since February 2018. From the age of eighteen, Tim has worked professionally in the automotive sector, beginning with his employment as an automotive technician at a new car dealership in 1997 while attending his local community college's automotive trade school program. He was promoted to lead a team of technicians in his third year at the dealership.

In 2000, he joined the Bureau of Automotive Repair as a Program Representative Investigator at the Bureau's Sacramento Field Office. He also served also as a complaint mediator, specialist in Consumer Protection Operations headquarters, a field office supervisor, the Program Manager over the Bureau's Case Management office, Program Manager of the Bureau's Consumer Assistance Program for repairing or retiring high polluter vehicles, Program Manager of the Enforcement Operations Branch, and as a Deputy Chief of the Bureau. From 2014 to 2017, Tim served as the Chief of Occupational Licensing at the Department of Motor Vehicles, where he was charged with the licensing and regulatory oversight of twenty automotive industry related programs.

In his current leadership role, Tim is focused on preserving the Board's well-earned reputation for providing nationally recognized, industry-leading automobile franchise dispute resolution services to an industry that contributes significantly to California's economy, employs over 130,000 people, and serves over thirty million California motorists. Tim has identified organizational resiliency, adaptability, and stakeholder collaboration as the essential pillars to achieving his goals for the Board.

Moderator



Kimberlee Vaye, Assistant Director and Equity Officer California New Motor Vehicle Board

Kim started her tenure with the State of California in 2010 with the Department of State Hospitals and worked within the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation as a Music Therapist, Supervising Rehabilitation Therapist, and Program Director. In 2018, she started with the CA Department of Transportation, as a Discipline Services Manager where she led the Caltrans District 10, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion taskforce, working diligently with internal staff and external partners, to advance equity in the workplace and within District 10 communities. Her work at Caltrans inspired her to pursue an opportunity to work at the CA Commission on the Status of Women and Girls where she was a Program Director, partnering with the Office of the First Partner and California Partners Project on the California Equal Pay Pledge, and starting the Commission's first statewide Youth Advisory Council since its inception in 1965. At the Commission, Kim created spaces where people could discuss practices and policies affecting women and girls, ensured individual voices were heard, and empowered everyone to speak their minds while working towards collective action.

In her current role, Kim is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the NMVB and the supervision and oversight of its staff and service providers. She serves as the NMVB Equity Officer and applies best practices to the Board's work and its communications and engagement with the public and with various governmental, public, and industry stakeholders. Kim fosters an environment that puts people first and is passionate about creating meaningful partnerships that advance equity in the transportation industry.

Panelists



Gavin Hughes, Attorney
The Law Offices of Gavin M. Hughes

Gavin M. Hughes received his undergraduate degree from the University of California Davis and his Juris Doctorate from the McGeorge School of Law. Prior to starting The Law Offices of Gavin M. Hughes in 2016, Mr. Hughes was an associate with the Law Offices of Michael J. Flanagan, specializing in California automotive franchise law. Mr. Hughes continues to represent car, truck, and motorcycle dealers in matters involving franchise disputes. The majority of Mr. Hughes' litigation practice is before the New Motor Vehicle Board, where he has litigated protests regarding establishments, relocations, terminations, franchisor performance metrics, disputed labor rate calculations, and warranty and incentive audits. Mr. Hughes recently represented a protesting dealer in a protest referred to and heard by the California Office of Administrative Hearings.



Mark Cloutre, Partner
Nelson Mullins

Mark has litigation experience both in and out of the courtroom. He focuses his practice on complex commercial litigation, including litigation representing distributors and franchisors. He also handles aviation, product liability, toxic tort, employment, malpractice defense, and general tort cases. Mark's clients include nationally recognized automotive and heavy truck manufacturers, airlines, shipping providers, and professional service firms. Mark has litigated more than 45 complex cases before judges and juries in trial and appellate courts and before administrative agencies in 14 states from Alaska to Florida. He also oversaw and comanaged, with another firm, more than 400 arbitrations in 48 states, of which he personally arbitrated eight of the matters in California and Texas, during a seven-month span following the bankruptcy of a former automotive group. Mark is a certified arbitrator with the American Arbitration Association.

Panelists



**Steve Kelso, Shareholder
Greenberg Traurig, LLP**

Steven M. Kelso is a commercial litigator that has tried more than trials, agency actions, and arbitrations to verdict, decision, or award. Steve focuses on defending franchisors and motor vehicle manufacturers/distributors in disputes with franchisees and dealers. With deep experience in pre-litigation dealer network counseling, Steve also represents his clients in various state and federal courts, before administrative agencies, and on appeal. He has delivered precedent-setting arguments that have shaped franchise and related commercial law throughout the country. His appellate experience includes preserving motor vehicle manufacturers' and distributors' ability to enforce litigation waivers in the face of anti-waiver statutes.

Steve develops litigation strategies with his clients' legal and business goals in mind. Steve goes beyond traditional representation to create tailored, innovative narratives to effectively demonstrate to judges and juries how his clients' businesses work. As a result, he has defended companies and franchisors against lawsuits attacking their business models. Steve began his legal career by serving in the U.S. Air Force Judge Advocate General's Corps. While in the Air Force, he served as lead trial counsel and supervising attorney on a range of complex jury trials.

**Robin Parker, Chief Counsel
California New Motor Vehicle Board**

Robin Parker serves as Chief Counsel to the California New Motor Vehicle Board (NMVB), where she provides high-level legal counsel to the Board and its Executive leadership. As a seasoned legal professional with over 32 years of experience at the NMVB, she serves as their top legal advisor, overseeing all legal aspects of the Board's operations, including case management, judicial matters, rulemaking, legislative analysis, and public records requests. She develops NMVB policies and procedures, analyzes complex legal issues, and ensures the Board's compliance with various statutes, rules, and regulations, including the Open Meeting Act and Administrative Procedure Act. Robin is a designated hearing officer and currently presiding over mandatory settlement conferences.

In August of 2024, Robin was awarded the Solon C. Soteras Employee Recognition Award alongside Administrative Law Judge Anthony M. Skrocki in recognition of their exceptional leadership and contributions in developing legacy training materials and mentoring the next generation of NMVB legal staff. Robin has presented at NMVB Industry and Attorney Roundtables, conferences hosted by the National Association of Motor Vehicle Boards and Commissions, the California Recreation Vehicle Dealers Association, and the RV Industry Association.

Panelists



**Anthony Bento, Chief Legal Officer
California New Car Dealers Association**

Anthony Bento is the Chief Legal Officer at the California New Car Dealers Association. Anthony serves as CNCDA's chief legal counsel and advocates on behalf of dealer interests with California's various regulatory agencies and Capitol policymakers. Anthony is also the primary architect of CNCDA's member compliance resources, including webinars, alerts, and manuals designed specifically for California's new car dealers.

Anthony earned a J.D. from the University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law and B.A. from the University of California, Santa Cruz. During law school, Anthony was inducted into the Order of the Coif honors society, he was the Chief Legislation Editor of the McGeorge Law Review, and he clerked at California's Third District Court of Appeal. Anthony is an avid skier and photographer.



**Curt Augustine, Senior Director, State Affairs
Alliance for Automotive Innovation**

Curt has been with Auto Innovators since its inception and was previously with the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers since 2009. Curt serves as the Auto Innovators' chief legislative representative before policymakers in the Western United States and works with our members to formulate policy-based strategies for legislative and regulatory issues. Previous to joining the auto industry, he served as Deputy Legislative Secretary to Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and was responsible for legislation related to transportation, business, financial, economic development, and local government issues. Additionally, Curt served for eight years in the Gov. Pete Wilson Administration in various executive capacities and has also headed a construction industry non-profit association tasked with workforce development policy issues.

Panelist



Bridget McGovern, Partner Squire Patton Boggs

Bridget McGovern is a partner in the Public Policy Practice Group. She primarily advises global companies, private equity firms, and asset managers on national security and trade matters. From foreign investment review to tariff matters to emerging technology policy and regulatory issues, Bridget counsels clients on how to navigate the intersection of business, law, policy, and politics. Whether it is shepherding a client through a review of their transaction by the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS) or advising clients on supply chain issues which raise national security concerns or which are impacted by tariffs, Bridget provides clients with astute insights and guidance reflecting both her deep understanding of how global businesses operate and how senior U.S. Government officials view and decide issues.

Bridget has served at senior levels in the U.S. Government, including most recently in the Biden-Harris Administration as the Assistant Secretary for Trade and Economic Security at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and previously at the State Department. As Assistant Secretary, Bridget played a key role in decisions pertaining to supply chains, trade, tariffs, emerging technology (AI), sensitive data, foreign investment, combatting forced labor, and outbound investment. Bridget sat on CFIUS where she worked closely with senior officials throughout the interagency on complicated transactions involving potential risks to national security across a variety of business sectors. Bridget also oversaw the implementation of the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act and played a key role in responding to a variety of supply chain issues impacting businesses and consumers. Bridget also worked closely with members of the interagency on trade investigations and tariffs.

Bridget has held senior level positions in two publicly traded global companies in the payments and technology sectors, MoneyGram International and Uber Technologies. During her tenure at Uber, Bridget was the Director for Public Policy, Payments, where she managed the global payments policy portfolio and helped launch Uber Money. At MoneyGram, Bridget held the role of Associate General Counsel for Global Regulatory Affairs and External Relations.

Panelist



Kate Tuma, Partner
Squire Patton Boggs

Kate leads the firm's Global and US Automotive & Transportation Industry Group. She primarily represents automotive manufacturers and transportation sector clients in a broad range of domestic and cross border corporate transactions. From mergers and acquisitions, joint ventures, to strategic investments and technology/IP transactions. She is a trusted advisor to some of the largest car companies in the world, and she regularly advises corporate strategy teams on navigating regulatory compliance, policy, and geopolitical issues affecting the automotive industry and clients' global operations.

Given her broad-based experience, Kate also advises clients on multi-jurisdictional, internal investigations, pre-dispute/litigation matters, and collaborates closely with the firm's arbitration and trial teams on a wide range of antitrust, complex commercial, distressed assets, and project finance disputes. In 2019-2020, she also served as the interim director of litigation and associate general counsel for a publicly traded Japanese financial group.

Kate was an associate and partner in the firm's Tokyo and Seoul offices from 2008 to 2017 and is now primarily resident in the firm's LA office. As one of the only women to lead and co-chair a global law firm's Automotive & Transportation industry group, she was recently recognized as a 2024 Law Firm Visionaries by the Los Angeles Times and is consistently recognized for excellence by the Los Angeles Business Journal, Chambers Transportation: Road (Automotive) category, and Legal 500 Asia Pacific.

Panelist



Rob Cohen, Chief Administrative Officer and General Counsel

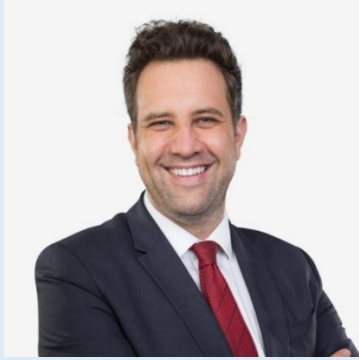
Vitu

Rob Cohen started with Auto Advisory Services (AAS) in 1994 as a law clerk. Over the years, he held roles as an auditor, staff attorney, and managing partner. Rob later served as president of AAS from 2006 to 2014 and as chairman from 2014 to 2018. In May of 2018, he sold AAS to KPA Services, Inc. Rob is a co-founder of Motor Vehicle Software Corporation (now “Vitu”), which, in 2007, launched DMVdesk, the industry’s first comprehensive vehicle registration management system. In 2015, he sold his interest in MVSC to Accel-KKR. From 2011 to 2020, Rob served as Senior Automotive Counsel with Arent Fox’s Automotive Industry Practice.

In 2024, Rob joined the legal team representing Vitu in its acquisition of Dealertrack’s registration, titling, and collateral management businesses. Shortly after the deal closed, he returned to Vitu as Chief Administrative Officer and General Counsel. Vitu is the leading provider of electronic vehicle registration and e-titling products in the U.S. Rob worked as a car salesman and in F&I during law school. He earned his B.A. and M.B.A. from the University of California, Irvine, before obtaining his J.D. from Whittier College School of Law.

Rob is a founding director and past president of the National Association of Dealer Counsel (NADC) and has been published in the *Automotive News*, *Ward’s Dealer Business*, *Orange County Business Journal* and *F&I Management and Technology*. A frequent speaker and trainer on a wide range of subjects pertaining to dealership sales and finance compliance, Rob co-authored and published the top-selling *Automotive Dealership Information Safeguards Manual*, the *Automotive Dealership Identity Theft Guide*, the *Automotive Dealership Red Flags Rule Guidebook*, as well as *Auto Dealer Law, First Ed.*

Panelist



Franjo Dolenac, Partner ArentFox Schiff

Franjo is a Partner at ArentFox Schiff in its Automotive group, which has been recognized by Chambers USA as one of the best in the country. He has represented clients in various business and commercial matters, including franchise, antitrust, consumer, contract, energy and environmental, copyright, trade secret, and complex/class action cases. His broad experience includes pre-lawsuit investigations, motion practice, mediation, trial, and writs and appeals. Franjo has served clients as both lead trial counsel and co-counsel in jury trials, bench trials, and administrative hearings.

Notable achievements for clients include:

- ✓ A commercial breach of contract jury trial that yielded a unanimous verdict awarding the commercial bus dealer's full request for relief.
- ✓ A complex, asbestos, jury trial against a vehicle dealer, prevailing on a novel evidentiary motion in limine before the case reached the jury, resulting in no liability to the client.
- ✓ A "dealer vs. dealer" dispute involving specific performance and constructive trust equitable claims related to a buy/sell agreement of a new automobile dealership, resulting in a complete victory for the client.
- ✓ Two separate protests and resulting administrative merits hearings before the New Motor Vehicle Board prosecuting the motorcycle dealers' protest of termination of their franchise agreements by the franchisor-manufacturer, prevailing on both protests.
- ✓ A successful protest and administrative merits hearing before the New Motor Vehicle Board, representing the California New Car Dealers Association challenging Jaguar Land Rover North America's exporting policy.
- ✓ An appeal of a commercial bus dealer's favorable judgment on issues of Commercial Code applicability, substantial evidence supporting the jury verdict, and reasonableness of the client's attorney fee award, resulting in the Court's affirming the judgment.

Panelists

Adrienne Moretz, Special Advisor, Innovation and Partnerships California Strategic Growth Council

Adrienne is the Strategic Growth Council's Special Advisor, Innovation and Partnerships. Adrienne has over a decade of experience building programs and executing strategic partnerships with the private and public sector. Her focus has been working at the intersections of transportation, land use, equity, and technology. She was most recently the Manager of Government Partnerships at Getaround, a peer-to-peer carshare company, where she built and managed partnerships with municipal transportation partners across the US to encourage and grow carsharing as well as advocated for positive policy change at the local and state level. Prior to Getaround, Adrienne worked on strategic initiatives across land use and transportation disciplines as a Senior Program Manager at the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG). She managed a start-up accelerator for local governments called Civic Lab, which used a design-thinking based framework to support 70+ partners and over 16 launched projects over three years. She also developed the region's Innovative Mobility Program, a federally funded \$6 million program that supported transportation projects across the Sacramento region. Adrienne also managed community relations, marketing, and outreach to promote Frederick County Maryland's public transit, paratransit and commuter assistance programs during her time as the Community Relations Manager.



Tim Weisberg, Deputy Director California Office of Traffic Safety

Tim Weisberg is the Deputy Director of Communications and Public Affairs for the California Office of Traffic Safety, a position he has held since April 2022. He first joined the OTS as a Public Information Officer in May 2018. At the OTS, Tim develops and markets traffic safety initiatives. Tim also worked as a Public Information Officer with Caltrans in Los Angeles, and as a local news producer with ABC10 in Sacramento.

Panelist



**Lonny Haschel, Senior Program Manager
National Safety Council**

Lonny retired from the Texas Department of Public Safety in 2021 after serving in law enforcement for over 33 years. He was retired for 59 days before accepting a position with the National Safety Council.

Lonny is a Senior Program Manager in the Mobility Safety Division and oversees the Check To Protect Program. Check To Protect is a national initiative, made up of a coalition of automakers, and led by NSC. The campaign reminds drivers of the importance of checking for open safety recalls on their vehicles and getting their vehicles repaired. More than 57 million vehicles across the U.S. have open safety recalls and the National Safety Council sees this as a serious concern. Check To Protect focuses on reaching drivers of older vehicles, which tend to change hands more frequently, making it harder for automakers to track current owners with recall notification systems. In this role, Lonny collaborates with automakers, local, state, and federal government. Additionally, Check To Protect works with community groups in underserved communities, traffic safety advocacy groups, and others in the auto industry.

Networking Session



Christina Michel, Chief, Investigations Division California Department of Motor Vehicles

Christina is a dedicated leader with a rich career spanning over three decades, starting as a U.S. Marine in 1993. She transitioned to a 7-year tenure at Pepsi Cola before joining the California Highway Patrol (CHP) in 2002. She thrived as a CHP officer, eventually transferring to DMV Investigations in 2006. In 2008, she made a pivotal move to Internal Affairs, showcasing versatility in roles such as Investigator, Sergeant, and Area Commander. In 2021, she was appointed Chief of Investigations, where she spearheaded modernization efforts, establishing a groundbreaking Data Forensics Unit. This unit's innovative approach utilizes data to identify fraud indicators, enhancing investigative efficiency and proactive intervention. Chief Michel is a distinguished graduate of National University, holding a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice Administration, further underscoring her commitment to excellence in her field.



Virginia Vu, Assistant Division Chief California Department of Motor Vehicles

Virginia Vu is the Assistant Division Chief of the Vehicle Industry and Business Enterprises section of the Industry Administration Branch within the Policy Division. She served as the Acting Branch Chief of the Industry Administration Branch from July 2022 to January 2025. The Policy Division is responsible for setting policy and procedures for the Department across licensing, registration, and information release. The Division is also responsible for translating those policies and procedures into key industry oversight and driving critical policy-related programs. The Policy Division aligns to the DMV's strategic mission by effectively supporting internal Department customers, improving the safety and well-being of the motoring public, and properly regulating the industries of both today and tomorrow.

She is responsible for the administration of various vehicle registration industry programs including Business Partners Automation, Auto Club, Interstate Carrier, Electronic Lien and Title, and Vehicle Insurance and select occupational licensing programs such as Traffic Violator School, Driving School, and Ignition Interlock Device. Virginia has held a variety of positions over her 15 years at DMV ranging from analytical to program management in both licensing and vehicle registration realms.