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Former Top California Official Joins Alston & Bird as Senior Policy Advisor Susan Kennedy to Expand the Firm's Public Policy Reach

Los Angeles / Sacramento, May 23, 2011 – Susan Kennedy, former Chief of Staff to Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and former Cabinet Secretary to Governor Gray Davis, has joined Alston & Bird LLP as the Senior Policy Advisor for California. In this role, Kennedy will help Alston & Bird and the firm's national and international clients successfully conduct business in California. Kennedy will divide her time between the firm's Los Angeles and Northern California offices, and will work closely with Alston & Bird's Washington, D.C., Public Policy Group.

"Susan's deep knowledge of policies, people and governmental processes makes her a valuable advisor for Alston & Bird, and our clients," noted Richard R. Hays, managing partner of Alston & Bird. "Her extraordinary ability in crafting successful, strategic approaches to complex business issues that involve governments at the state and federal level is unmatched."

"Alston & Bird is a growing force in California, and its business model and client base align closely with my background and expertise," said Kennedy. "I look forward to being affiliated with a firm that understands the importance of the intersections between public policy and business, and I will draw upon my experience to help the firm and its clients in this and other areas."

Kennedy has been recognized as “the most enduring force in state government of the last decade” by the *Los Angeles Times*. During her tenure in Sacramento, she built a formidable bipartisan reputation at the highest levels of California state government. She is recognized by Democrats and Republicans, business and labor, as the go-to person to “get it done.” The addition of Kennedy to Alston & Bird’s California team rounds out the firm’s strong national public policy platform. Most recently, former U.S. Senator Blanche Lincoln, first female chair of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, joined the firm’s Washington, D.C., office. Other recent high-profile government policy leaders that have joined in Washington, D.C., include former U.S. Congressman Billy Tauzin, who chaired the U.S. House of Representatives’ Energy and Commerce Committee, and former U.S. Congressman Earl Pomeroy, who was a senior member of the House Ways and Means Committee.

“California’s rapidly evolving business and public policy climates present our clients with a number of challenges and opportunities. Susan’s deep understanding of the inner workings of the government and how it works with business, combined with Alston & Bird’s superb legal services, will provide our clients with a powerful competitive edge,” added Thomas Wingard, partner-in-charge of the firm’s Los Angeles office.

Kennedy’s most notable achievements include:

- Worked with Governor Schwarzenegger to pass groundbreaking environmental initiatives and cut through regulatory red tape to build renewable energy plants in California, an effort so successful that one newspaper called California the new “Saudi Arabia of Solar.”
- Coordinated the Davis administration’s efforts to fast track construction of new power plants during the state’s energy crisis, thereby reducing the time for permitting from an average of two-three years down to, in some cases, just 21 days.
- Helped lead Governor Schwarzenegger’s historic victories in passing the most comprehensive infrastructure and water reform packages in half a century.
- Served as a Commissioner on the California Public Utilities Commission, where she succeeded in streamlining the state’s Byzantine regulatory process in order to promote investment in telecommunications, renewable energy and infrastructure.
- Appointed by Governor Schwarzenegger to the five-member Board of the Health Benefits Exchange. In this role, Kennedy will help design California’s health insurance market for the benefit of millions of individuals and small businesses in the most populous state.

About Alston & Bird

With 800 attorneys, Alston & Bird is a leading national *AmLaw 50* firm. The firm's core practice areas are intellectual property, complex litigation, corporate and tax, with national industry focuses in health care, financial services and public policy. The firm has built a reputation as one of the country's best employers, appearing on FORTUNE magazine's ranking of the "100 Best Companies to Work For" 12 consecutive years, an unprecedented accomplishment among law firms in the United States. The firm has offices in Atlanta, Charlotte, Dallas, Los Angeles, New York, Research Triangle, Silicon Valley, Ventura County and Washington, D.C.

For more information on Alston & Bird, please visit www.alston.com.