

Representing Texas Landowners Since 1894

Backed by 124 years of experience and a team of Thomson Reuters Super Lawyers® and Rising Stars®, Dawson & Sodd, LLP has a strong record of success fighting for landowners in eminent domain and condemnation cases.

Dawson & Sodd, LLP

By law, the United States government, the State of Texas, and other quasi-governmental entities have the right to seize private property for necessary public use—think roadway, pipeline, and utility projects that benefit the community as a whole. The issue, says Attorney Jody Sodd McSpadden, is that more often than not condemning authorities make offers that fail to reflect the full compensation that is owed under the law. What is offered is often much less than market value. Landowners who aren't familiar with the condemnation process and the laws related to just compensation sometimes take what's offered and walk away without being made whole.

But what most parties involved in these kinds of cases don't consider, says McSpadden, is that "our clients are not willing sellers. Every single individual or corporation we represent has been forced into giving up their property. Our role is to ensure our clients receive just compensation and to make sure our clients get paid every dollar they're entitled to under the law."

Big Wins in High Profile Cases

Dawson & Sodd, LLP serves clients throughout all of Texas, but two things help set it apart from other firms. "First, we never represent the condemning authorities—we're only on the landowners' side," says Attorney Tyler Milton. "And second, while we've had success negotiating pre-trial settlements, when necessary we've tried cases to a jury verdict against condemning authorities in which our clients recovered significantly more compensation than the condemnor contended they were owed."



When the new Dallas Cowboys Stadium was being built in Arlington, Dawson & Sodd, LLP represented numerous property owners whose property was slated for demolition, earning one client nearly six times what the government initially offered. "The final settlement netted the homeowner nearly \$2 million after fees and expenses," says Attorney Jason Sodd, who worked on the case.

Dawson & Sodd, LLP also represents numerous property owners across the entirety of the route for the proposed high-speed railroad connecting Houston and Dallas. In fact, says Attorney Clay Beard, "we're the only firm that we know of who has successfully defeated the project's private backers in court" by arguing that the group ultimately did not have eminent domain authority.

Experience Matters

"Involving experienced condemnation lawyers early on can make a huge difference," Attorney Matt Hurt notes. "We can help clients in ways they might not have considered by ensuring every compensable aspect is fully

considered. It's important that all potential damages resulting from the taking are fully vetted because a landowner only gets a single opportunity to recover just compensation."

Bottom line: "We want to protect property rights, we have extensive experience fighting the condemning entities, and we don't like seeing people being taken advantage of."

Dawson & Sodd, LLP co-founder Matt "Mad Dog" Dawson was one of the most successful trial attorneys in Texas. A legend statewide, he mentored many of the firm's current attorneys and spent a significant portion of his career teaching law at Baylor University, which maintains four scholarship funds in his name as well as an endowed professorship and an Advocacy Award. Dawson passed away in 2015 at the age of 98, but his fighting spirit, always in favor of Texas landowners, lives on at Dawson & Sodd, LLP.

DAWSON & SODD, LLP

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