



Christine M. Masse

Partner

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“I am committed to working with each client to understand their business, vision, and goals, and take a holistic and creative approach to bring together the best team to navigate the unique issues at hand. When a client is facing their toughest challenges, I make every effort to always be the responsive, tactful, and strategic voice in their corner who can cut through the noise and help find the solution.”

Chris Masse cochairs the firm’s tribal team, providing experienced counsel to Native American tribes and organizations on gaming, cannabis, real estate, construction, financing, tax, liquor, and other economic development issues. For more than twenty years, Chris has supported tribal clients in developing and executing strategies and coordinating complex projects with a team that often includes lawyers, lobbyists, experts, and communications specialists. She helps her tribal clients navigate various governmental agencies, including the Department of Interior, National Indian Gaming Commission, Washington Governor’s office, state legislature, Washington State Gambling Commission, Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board, and the Washington Department of Revenue.

Chris also chairs the firm’s cannabis industry team and is a sought-after advisor, counseling start-up and established cannabis and hemp businesses. She represents licensed producers, processors, retailers, test labs, and researchers, as well as businesses that provide services to the cannabis industry, such as banks, branding companies, consultants, developers, and investors with their transactional, regulatory, and licensing needs. Chris leads a multi-disciplinary team that assists with formation, mergers and acquisitions, capital raising, leasing, service agreements, excise tax, intellectual property protection and licensing, branding, marketing, and advertising, compliant with the constantly evolving matrix of state law and federal enforcement priorities. Since legalization of adult use cannabis in 2012, Chris has been involved in rulemaking on all aspects of Washington’s cannabis laws, as well as legislation aimed at improving the current regulated system, including bills related to social equity, medical marijuana, tribal marijuana compacts, enforcement reform, intellectual property

Education

J.D., University of Washington School of Law, with honors, 1999

B.A., University of Illinois, *magna cum laude*, business administration, 1996

Bar Admissions

Washington, 1999

protection, and omnibus bills to improve the overall marketplace. She maintains a practice before the Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board and coordinates with the firm's Portland office to advise Oregon cannabis and hemp clients.

Professional Activities

- International Masters of Gaming Law (IMGL), Member
 - Spring Conference Co-Chair, 2022
- King County Bar Association, Member
- Washington State Bar Association
 - Indian Law Section, Member
- American Bar Association, Member
- Federal Bar Association, Member

Representative Experience

Tribal Gaming

- Coauthored Washington State House Bill 2638, which authorized tribes in Washington to engage in sports wagering. Testified in support of the bill, worked on drafts and amendments of the bill with tribal and state staff.
- Negotiated and drafted inaugural sports wagering compacts in Washington. Worked on licensing rules, tribal gaming ordinance amendments, preparation of internal controls, review of vendor agreements, and implementation.
- Negotiated and drafted gaming compacts and amendments related to tribal lottery systems, table games, wager limits and credit, progressive jackpots, internal controls and operating standards, licensing system improvements, and general modernization.
- Negotiated and drafted general vendor contracts with casinos. Handled licensing matters before tribal gaming agencies and state regulators.
- Counseled various tribal clients on credit facilities, secured with gaming and other revenue, for construction and expansion of gaming and resort properties. Secured National Indian Gaming Commission declination letters and worked with the Washington State Gambling Commission to secure licensing exemptions for lenders.

Tribal Cannabis

- Coauthored Washington State House Bill 2000, which authorized the state to enter into cannabis compacts with Washington tribes. Lobbied for passage of the bill, worked on drafts and amendments of the bill with tribal and state staff.
- Coauthored Washington's inaugural tribal-state cannabis compact, and subsequent other cannabis compacts in Washington.
- Counseled numerous tribal clients on cannabis implementation, including entity and regulatory structure, tribal cannabis codes, formation documents for commercial cannabis entities, banking and credit relationships, vendor contracts, and other regulatory and transactional issues related to tribal cannabis activities.
- Counseled a Michigan tribe on entering lease with a commercial cannabis tenant on the tribe's lands, including handling negotiations with the state, revisions to tribal code, lease review, and other compliance issues.

Tribal Liquor

- Negotiated and drafted inaugural memorandum of agreement (MOA) between a Washington tribe and the Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board related to liquor licensing in Indian country and related tax issues. Handled subsequent negotiations for other Washington tribes. Regularly advise on compliance with MOAs and tribal liquor ordinances.

- Drafted liquor ordinances and advised on submittal for federal approval.
- Drafted agreement for construction and operation of distillery on tribal lands in wake of repeal of prohibition of tribal distilleries.

Commercial Cannabis—Government Relations

- Coauthored Washington State Senate Bill 5318 to reform Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board enforcement practices. Testified in support of the bill, worked on drafts and amendments of the bill with stakeholders and state staff.
- Coauthored Washington State House Bill 1794 to allow intellectual property licensing agreements in the cannabis industry. Testified in support of the bill, worked on drafts and amendments of the bill with stakeholders and state staff. Counseled clients in subsequently entering such agreements, compliance, and submission to Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board.
- Drafted legislation related to social equity programs, out of state ownership, and other Washington state reform efforts.

Commercial Cannabis—Regulatory

- Provide strategic advice in defense of administrative violations including sale to minors, true party of interest, undue influence and unlawful practices, advertising, traceability, extraction equipment, packaging and labeling, pesticides, and other compliance violations.
- Served on various rulemaking stakeholder work groups to reform Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board penalty grid as applied against cannabis licensees, to reform WSLCB's licensing practices for licensees, true parties of interest, and financiers, and to implement compliance checks and the WSLCB's compliance consultation program. Provided rulemaking comment on various open rulemaking, including original I-502 regulations.
- Counseled clients on administrative actions including edibles, packaging, and labeling reform; incorporation of cannabinoids, including Delta-8 THC and CBD, terpenes, and other substances into cannabis products; traceability; quality assurance testing, pesticides, and lab accreditation; and investment practices.
- Regularly work with clients to secure Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board approval of various licensing changes including change of ownership, assumption of license, change of location and operating plan, approval of management and consulting agreements, approval of intellectual property agreements, financier applications, and other regulatory compliance inquiries.

Commercial Cannabis—Transactions

- Managed \$80 million transaction for acquisition of contractual rights and intellectual property related to a Washington retailer.
- Assisted in cross-border transaction in acquisition of cannabis-related device manufacturer.
- Regularly counsel multistate operators (MSOs) regarding unique features of Washington State cannabis laws and regulations and structuring compliant transactions.
- Provided advice and counsel in sale of real estate assets to a cannabis REIT.
- Regularly assist in all manner of transactions including purchase and sale of cannabis inventory, specialized equipment, and other cannabis-related assets, acquisition and lease of cannabis real estate, lab services agreements, manufacturing agreements, management and consulting agreements, brand and trade secret protection.
- Prepare clients for acquisition, including business structure, corporate hygiene and governance, strategic advice and positioning, and diligence efforts.

Commercial Cannabis—Ancillary Businesses

- Counseled banks and credit unions on policies for accepting cannabis or cannabis-related deposits, best practices, and necessary reporting obligations.
- Advised software and technology companies on compliance for traceability, brokerage, quality assurance testing, point of sale, and other related functions and issues.
- Counseled product technology companies on licensing and compliance issues related to deployment of product tech in Washington cannabis market.
- Counseled testing lab on best practices, sample intake and maintenance, reporting requirements, and rulemaking engagement.
- Counseled real estate developers on property acquisition and transaction structure and compliance related to cannabis tenants.

Hemp Businesses

- Provide regulatory guidance to businesses engaged in the cultivation, processing, distribution, and sale of hemp and cannabidiol products under the Farm Bill and related state statutes.
- Monitor and provide guidance on U.S. Food and Drug Administration and Federal Trade Commission action as it relates to the marketing and sale of CBD products.
- Drafted manufacturing and white labeling agreements and managed disputes and end of contract issues.

Publications

- *The Turbulent History of Cannabis Regulatory Enforcement in Washington State*, 31 Cornell J.L. & Pub Pol’y 121 (Fall 2021)
- “Not All Bets Are Off,” Washington State Bar Association, *Washington State Bar News*, coauthor (Oct. 2020)
- “COVID-19: Cannabis Industry Resources,” Miller Nash Graham & Dunn, coauthor (Mar. 2020)
- “Women Have the Skills Needed to Grow the Cannabis Industry,” *Puget Sound Business Journal*, Special Report: Cannabis (July 2018)
- “Don’t Forget Tourism,” *Seattle Business* magazine, Economic Outlook feature (Jan. 2012)
- “Under Pressure: How Economic and Regulatory Strains Threaten to Undermine Tribal Gaming,” Thompson Reuters/Aspatore, *Inside the Minds: Understanding Gaming Law Issues* (June 2010)

Presentations

Chris is a frequent speaker. Following is a listing of presentations from the past five years.

- “Case Law Developments in Tribal Nations’ Ability to Protect Their Interests Through Sovereign Immunity,” Federal Bar Association, Indian Law Conference, panelist (Apr. 2024)
- “Sports Wagering—Five Years After the Fall of PASPA,” The Seminar Group, Annual Northwest Gaming Law Summit, moderator and conference cochair (Dec. 2023)
- “National Indian Gaming Commission Declination Letters,” The Seminar Group, Annual Northwest Gaming Law Summit (Dec. 2023)
- “The Current Legal Landscape: An Overview of Florida’s Seminole Tribe Court Decision,” G2E, Global Gaming Expo, panelist (Oct. 2023)
- “Legal and Regulatory Outlook,” Shield Compliance, Shield Client Connect (Oct. 2023)
- “Cannabis: Current and Future Trends in Indian Country in Washington and Beyond,” Washington State Bar Association, Indian Law Section, Annual CLE (May 2023)
- “Sports Betting in Washington,” Western Regional Conference on Problem Gambling Awareness, Focus on the Future (May 2023)
- “Growing the Green: Banking and Cannabis,” NAFOA, Annual Conference, panelist (Apr. 2023)

- “Understanding Tribal Sovereignty in the Context of Creditor-Debtor Law,” 36th Annual NW Bankruptcy Institute (Apr. 2023)
- “Before the Court: Maverick Gaming vs. Indian Country,” Indian Gaming 2023 Tradeshow & Conference (Mar. 2023)
- “Sports Betting Update,” Wiring the Rez: Innovative Strategies for Business Development via e-Commerce CLE Conference, panelist (Feb. 2023)
- “Event/Sports Wagering,” The Seminar Group, Annual Northwest Gaming Law Summit, cochair (Dec. 2022)
- “Sports Betting,” Center for Business Law & Innovation, Lewis & Clark Law School, Fall Forum 2022: Sports Law’s New Dimensions, panelist (Sept. 2022)
- “Sports Betting,” Northwest Indian Gaming Conference & Expo, copresenter (June 2022)
- “Unraveling the Technology Gordian Knot Hanging Over Indian Country: Innovations for Mobile Tribal Gaming Operations Arising from the Interplay Between the Wire Act, IGRA and UIGEA,” IMGL, Spring Conference, moderator (Apr. 2022)
- “Exploring New Frontiers in Tribal Gaming: The Rise of Tribal Sports Books and Esports Gambling in Indian Country,” IMGL, Spring Conference, panelist (Apr. 2022)
- “Sports Betting: Washington State’s New Compacts,” The Seminar Group, Annual Northwest Gaming Law Summit (Dec. 2021)
- “Tribal Gaming Developments,” IMGL, webinar, moderator (Oct. 2020)
- “State Legislative and Administrative Update,” Washington State Bar Association, Annual Indian Law CLE (Sept. 2020)
- “Tips For the End of the World: Legal Challenges Around COVID-19,” The Initiative, webinar (Apr. 2020)
- “Cannabis Issues Update,” National Intertribal Tax Alliance, Annual Tax Conference, moderator (Aug. 2019)
- “Case Study: What Modern Compacts Can Look Like,” Washington Indian Gaming Association, Northwest Indian Gaming Conference (June 2019)
- “Working With Your Attorney,” The Initiative, Accelerator Program (Jan. 2019)

Recognition & Honors

- Recognized as a “Leader in Their Field” by *Chambers USA*
 - Cannabis Law—Nationwide: Western U.S., 2021-present
 - Native American Law—Nationwide: Western U.S., 2024-present
- Selected for inclusion in *The Best Lawyers in America*[®] (Seattle, WA)
 - Native American Law, 2017-present; “Lawyer of the Year,” 2018, 2024
 - Gaming Law, 2013-present; “Lawyer of the Year,” 2014, 2017, 2019, 2023
- Selected for inclusion as a Washington Super Lawyer, 2015-present
 - Top 50 Women Washington Super Lawyers, 2020-2021
 - Selected as a Rising Star, 2005-2014
- Selected for inclusion in *The Business Journals’* Top 100 Influencers: Law list, 2019

Personal Activities

Chris is a sports enthusiast. She enjoys playing soccer, rooting for the Chicago Bears, and holding season tickets for the Seattle Sounders FC, Seattle’s Major League Soccer club. Chris coached Rocket 88, a boys’ premier soccer team for the Woodland Soccer Club in Seattle, from 2001 to 2007.