

Native American Law & Tribal Governance

Stinson's tribal governance attorneys possess a valuable breadth of experience when it comes to assisting tribes and tribal entities. We recognize the need for entrepreneurial initiative and action that respects cultural values and protects tribal sovereignty.

Clients value our keen depth of understanding of the unique issues facing tribes, their entities and those who wish to do business with them. Our clients have included tribes or tribal entities throughout Arizona and in California, New Mexico, Minnesota and Wisconsin.

CAPABILITIES

We assist clients with legal needs in the following areas:

- Tribal governance
- Human resources guidance/counseling
- Employee benefits
- Commercial and retail leasing
- Real estate contracts and title matters
- Tribal housing
- Transportation
- Health care
- Energy and telecommunications
- Environmental and water law
- Finance, public works and public purposes bonds
- Taxation
- Construction
- Government contract consultation
- Private contracting

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- Code and policy development
- Tribal finance/lending and borrowing
- Employment and independent contractors
- Joint ventures
- Arbitration
- Appellate litigation
- Commercial litigation
- Real estate and tribal housing

GUIDANCE & COUNSELING

- Advising on tribal jurisdiction and environmental law issues in connection with accidents within the reservation's boundaries.
- Involved in the development of employment policies and procedures for tribal entities.
- Representing tribes and tribal enterprises on retail shopping center leases, guarantees, lease assignments and related disputes.
- Providing human resource guidance and counseling on behalf of multiple Native American tribes and tribal entities. The firm has led investigations and recommendations concerning investigations of employees and appropriate corrective action. Moreover, the firm also provides trainings, including anti-harassment, discrimination and retaliation; conducting investigations; implementing and managing employee evaluations; and other relevant topics.
- Giving guidance and counseling related to tribal benefits, HIPAA and participation in state retirement systems.
- Representing tribal housing arms in connection with drafting housing policies and assisting in internal governance concerning tribal members' use of reservation lands.
- Advising public utilities regarding a possible alternative energy joint venture in Indian country.
- Serving as counsel to tribal entities on several projects in Indian country, including construction and related tourism projects. These engagements require our assessment of tribal contracting issues, including determining alternative solutions so that the tribal entities' sovereign immunity was preserved, while ensuring that the other contracting parties' interests were also protected.
- Advising banks, small businesses and Fortune 500 companies in business transactions and litigation with tribes.

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LITIGATION

- Obtained a dismissal of all claims against all plaintiffs in connection with the representation of the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation, three police officers (including the chief of police) and three casino security officers in a case alleging civil rights violations under 42 U.S.C. 1983 and violations under the Kansas Tort Claims Act.
- Represented the Native American claimants in the *Keepseagle v. Vilsack* class action lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The lawsuit claimed the USDA discriminated against Native American farmers by denying them equal access to the USDA Farm Loan Program. In 2011, the parties reached a \$760 million settlement in favor of the Native American claimants.
- Submitted an amicus curiae brief on behalf of an Arizona tribe in support of the proposition that the tribe's tribally chartered subsidiaries have sovereign immunity; the court subsequently agreed with the tribe's position.
- Represented tribal interests in litigation before the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia relating to the U.S. Interior Department's recognition of tribal status and tribal leadership status in connection with dispute over the leadership and direction of a historically California-based tribe, *California Valley Miwok Tribe v. Jewell*.

CONTACT: Sharon W. Ng | 602.212.8676 | sharon.ng@stinson.com

TEAM

Thomas R. Dowling

Carrie M. Francis

Eric H. Galatz

Roy Goldberg

Sharon W. Ng

RELATED CAPABILITIES

Private Business

Business Litigation

Construction

Energy

Labor, Employment & Benefits

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NEWS

Sharon Ng Selected as Recipient of *Jurimetrics* Distinguished Alumni Award

04.15.2024

Sharon Ng Recognized in Lawyer of the Year Category for *Chambers* D&I Awards

06.21.2021

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