

Claire Mitchell

Principal

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Claire is a nationally recognized lawyer advising food, beverage and hospitality businesses on complex federal, state and local regulatory requirements.

Claire's clients include grocers, restaurants, hotel and resort operators, e-commerce retailers, sports and entertainment venues, airlines, cruise lines, alcohol brand owners, producers of beer, wine and spirits, and private equity investors. Her practice involves advising businesses on federal and state liquor licensing, tied house compliance, trade practice regulation, advertising campaigns, sponsorship deals, acquisitions, procurement of non-liquor permits and licenses, and a wide range of industry-specific commercial transactions.

Claire develops practical and tailored strategies that ensure her clients comply with the regulations while simultaneously achieving their business objectives. In her many years of practice, Claire has built strong connections with regulators, consultants and trade associations, and she leverages that network to help clients expedite necessary approvals, structure new and innovative business models, resolve compliance concerns and overcome challenging regulatory obstacles.

What Clients Say About Claire

"I cannot express how much I appreciate your support on this deal and securing the licensing approvals. [Y]our hard work and expertise enabled us to work through all of the issues that

Services

Commercial & IP
Transactions
Alcoholic Beverages
Business & Corporate
Finance
Consumer Brands
Food & Beverage
Hospitality, Travel & Tourism
Mergers & Acquisitions
Sports, Arts & Entertainment

Admissions

Washington
Oregon
New York

arose.... This is a significant milestone for the company, and your work and expertise plays a direct contribution in ensuring that [the company] is set up for success in Washington. I had complete confidence in you throughout the transaction, and you made my job significantly easier. I know firsthand how much work goes into staying on track of all the moving parts, and you guys made it look easy."

Education

LL.M., University of Arkansas School of Law, Food and Agricultural Law, 2014

J.D., Hofstra University School of Law, 2010

B.A., Villanova University (*magna cum laude*), English, 2007

Honors & Recognition

Chambers USA (Nationwide) Up and Coming, Food & Beverages: Alcohol, 2024-present

The Best Lawyers in America[®]

- Corporate Law, 2023–present

Professional Activities

Alliance of Alcohol Industry Attorneys & Consultants, Member

National Association of Licensing and Compliance Professionals, Associate Member

National Alcoholic Beverage Control Association, Associate Member

National Conference of State Liquor Administrators, Associate Member

Washington Wine Industry Foundation, Board Member, January 2024–present

News

Foster Garvey Recognized Among Nation's Top Firms in 2025 Chambers USA Guide; 26 Attorneys and 13 Practices Ranked
Foster Garvey Newsroom, 6.5.25

Foster Garvey Welcomes Accomplished Alcoholic Beverage Team
Foster Garvey Newsroom, 2.12.25

Speaking Engagements

"Kickoff to FIFA World Cup 2026: Licensing & Regulation at Large Public Events," NCSLA 2025
Central/Western Regional Conference
Speaking Engagement
Rapid City, SD, October 5-7, 2025

"AI Revolution: What Are the Regulatory Implications of Creating a 'Smart' Alcohol Beverage Industry?" National Conference of State Liquor Administrators, Annual Conference
Speaking Engagement
Washington, D.C., 6.18.24

"The Intoxicating Legal Maze of Alcohol Marketing Compliance," Washington State Bar Association
CLE Webcast
Seattle, WA, 3.29.24

"Alcohol/Non-Alcohol 'Crossover' Products and Practices: A Growing Policy Challenge," 27th Annual Wine, Beer & Spirits Law Conference
Speaking Engagement
Savannah, GA, 10.26.23

"The Newsroom: Trending Hot Topics on Breaking Barriers to Industry Recovery," National Association of Licensing and Compliance Professionals
Speaking Engagement
Portland, OR, 9.23.22

"From Mash to Market: A Primer on the Law of Spirits," Young Lawyers Division Meeting, King County Bar Association
Speaking Engagement
Seattle, WA, 4.24.19

"A Primer on the Food Safety Modernization Act for Wineries," Business of Wine Seminar
Speaking Engagement
Portland, OR, 6.6.18

"FDA's Final Rules Regarding Nutrition Labeling and Serving Sizes," Operations and Technical Affairs Committee Meeting, Northwest Food Processors Association
Speaking Engagement
Portland, OR, 9.20.16

"Trademark Basics: Protecting Your Brand," Be the Entrepreneur, University of Idaho
Speaking Engagement
Moscow, ID, 6.15.16

“U.S. Consumer Protection Law: Focus on Food Labeling Litigation,” 2015 Global Legal Forum,
Korea Legislation Research Institute
Speaking Engagement
Seoul, South Korea, 11.13.15

“Overcoming the Wage Gap: Panel Discussion,” Diversity Week, Seattle University School of
Law
Speaking Engagement
Seattle, WA, 2.25.15

Legal Alerts

Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board Seeks Feedback on Proposed Rules for
Expanded Alcohol Service Areas
8.8.25

Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board Announces New Online Licensing Portal
3.28.25

Washington Proposes New Rules to Address Alcohol Merchandising Practices
3.11.25

Publications

Co-Author, Washington Chapter, Wine in America: Law and Policy, Richard Mendelson ed.,
Second Edition, 2023
3.1.23

Experience

Representative Alcohol Beverage Licensing and Regulatory Work

Retail Tier

- Provides ongoing counsel to one of the largest retailers in the world on issues ranging from consumer marketing programs related to alcohol, private label alcohol, direct to consumer sales, state bottle bill requirements and tied house restrictions.
- Serves as alcohol licensing and regulatory counsel in Washington and Oregon for a multibillion dollar instant delivery retailer of alcohol, food and other consumer goods.
- Coordinated the process for obtaining spirits retail sales privileges at over 60 locations on behalf of a national grocery store chain.

- Representation of world's largest coffeehouse chain in obtaining liquor licenses on a national scale.
- Assisted a global e-commerce retailer in obtaining a liquor license for its brick and mortar cashless and checkout-free shopping experience, the first such location of its kind in the U.S.
- Representation of multiple international hotel operators in seeking state liquor licenses across the Pacific Northwest.
- Advocated on behalf of an age restricted living community before the Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board in connection with seeking a liquor license for a complex multi-use area.
- Regularly perform 50-state survey research to determine the permissibility of alcohol advertising promotions, production and distribution of private label alcohol and the direct shipment of wine on behalf of retail and non-retail liquor licensed companies.
- Representation of convenience store management company in obtaining state liquor, lottery, tobacco and over-the-counter medicine sales licenses at multiple stores in multiple states.
- Work with multiple global cruise lines on alcohol licensing and compliance matters.

Supplier Tier

- Regularly serves as the lead alcohol regulatory subject matter expert in connection with transactions that involve businesses holding liquor licenses, with a focus on handling alcohol related due diligence, preparation and negotiation of corresponding sections of transaction documents, and post-closing licensure and compliance matters.
- Performs detailed analysis of state tied house and trade practice restrictions on behalf of numerous supplier clients on a national level on an ongoing basis.
- Handled state alcohol regulatory matters in partnership with the Oregon Liquor and Cannabis Commission in connection with one of the largest winery acquisitions in Oregon's history on behalf of the buyer.
- Analysis of alcohol franchise laws in all 50 states in order to draft alcohol distribution agreements on behalf of a large hard seltzer producer in connection with its nationwide product launch.
- Managed the process for obtaining critical distribution licenses from the Washington Liquor and Cannabis Board on behalf of one of the world's largest brewers and beer distribution companies.
- Provided strategic guidance to a mid-market wine company in connection with its entry into spirits importation and distribution in a dozen states throughout the U.S.

- Counseled a Washington-based brewery on a multi-phased expansion involving the licensing of multiple restaurants, a brewery, a beer garden, a live music venue and other features.
- Drafted an international contract manufacturing and export agreement on behalf of a U.S.-based tequila brand owner.
- Assisted one of the nation's largest contract alcohol producers in obtaining production licenses from the California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control.
- Completed an in-depth analysis of an alcohol producer's product labels to ensure compliance with Food and Drug Administration, Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau and Federal Trade Commission regulations.

Representative Food Regulatory Work

- Regularly serves as the lead food and FDA regulatory subject matter expert in connection with transactions that involve food and agriculture industry businesses, with a focus on handling regulatory due diligence, preparation and negotiation of corresponding sections of transaction documents, and post-closing licensure and compliance matters.
- Representation of big-box retailer in product labeling and advertising matters—including labeling claims related to nutrition, safety, country of origin and environment—to ensure compliance with Food and Drug Administration, Customs and Border Patrol, and Federal Trade Commission regulations.
- Renegotiated vendor contracts on behalf of a national cheese and dairy product processing company.
- Frequently counsels food processors, farms, alcohol manufacturers, warehouses and other businesses on the legal requirements under the Food Safety Modernization Act.
- Advised multiple food processors and retailers on the legal implications of producing and selling food containing cannabidiol (CBD).
- Provides guidance to multiple food and agribusiness companies on the permits and licenses necessary for food production, storage, transportation, distribution and sale on an ongoing basis.