

Agustin E. Rodriguez

Partner

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Agustin is a seasoned business partner who leverages his in-house background to guide tobacco, cannabis, gambling, and other highly regulated clients as they navigate federal, state, and local regulation of the licensing, taxation, marketing, advertising, and sale of their products and services.

OVERVIEW

Agustin is sought after by clients for his strategic counsel on their most challenging competitive and regulatory compliance issues, including tobacco Master Settlement Agreement issues, federal and state enforcement investigations, licensing and excise tax issues, developing compliance programs, and evaluating advertising and marketing practices. A partner in the firm's Regulatory Investigations, Strategy + Enforcement (RISE) Practice Group as well as its Tobacco + Nicotine and Cannabis law practices, he represents manufacturers, distributors, retailers, and suppliers in all aspects of their businesses, including regulatory compliance, FDA requirements, administrative disputes involving federal or state governmental entities, mergers and acquisitions, commercial agreements, and taxation matters.

Before joining the firm, Agustin was a vice president and associate general counsel at Altria Group, Inc., the largest tobacco company in the U.S. In this role, he addressed a wide range of compliance, corporate governance, litigation, and transactional issues worldwide, focusing on strategic results and successful resolutions. Agustin leverages this experience to work with clients in all segments of the tobacco industry, including cigarettes, cigars, smokeless tobacco, e-cigarettes, and other novel products.

Fluent in Spanish and proficient in Portuguese, Agustin has built supply chain compliance programs in Europe, Latin America, Asia, and Africa, and helped build several regulatory compliance systems, including systems designed to mitigate exposure to risks in the areas of antitrust law, anticorruption/antibribery laws, the FCPA, and corporate social responsibility.

Agustin often writes about regulatory issues and provides ongoing analysis and commentary on regulatory developments. He is a contributor to the firm's regulatory blog, [Regulatory Oversight](#).

TOP AREAS OF FOCUS

- Cannabis
- Marketing + Advertising

- State Attorneys General
- Tobacco + Nicotine

ALL AREAS OF FOCUS

- Tobacco + Nicotine
- Cannabis
- Marketing + Advertising
- Hemp + Hemp Derivatives Industry
- Consumer Products
- Corporate
- International
- Litigation + Trial
- State Attorneys General
- Regulatory Investigations, Strategy + Enforcement
- Gaming

REPRESENTATIVE MATTERS

Tobacco

- Represented a tobacco company in a multiyear arbitration with state attorneys general of 18 states and territories over disputed payments of participating manufacturers under the Master Settlement Agreement (MSA).
- Represented a tobacco company in litigation against and investigations by state and local agencies related to state and local regulation of tobacco products.
- Represented various tobacco companies on issues related to state litigation; FDA regulation; marketing; unfair trade practices statutes; antitrust (Sherman Act and Robinson-Patman Act); anticorruption and antibribery; federal and state excise taxes; state licensing and other state laws, such as like cigarette minimum price laws and cigarette model complementary legislation; and other relevant legislative and rulemaking issues.

Cannabis

- Counseled Harvest Health and Recreation Inc. on regulatory matters in connection with its sale to Trulieve Inc., which, at the time of closing, created the largest cannabis operator in the U.S. on a combined retail and cultivation footprint basis.
- Counseled various issuers listing on U.S. securities exchanges about federal and state cannabis regulation.
- Counseled a mezzanine financier seeking to invest in a state medical marijuana licensee.
- Counseled various manufacturers and suppliers of smokeable hemp and other cannabis products on federal and state cannabis regulation.
- Counseled payment processors about federal and state cannabis regulation.

Advertising and Marketing

- Represented a retailer in investigations by state attorneys general regarding alleged unfair and deceptive product

marketing practices.

- Counseled various clients on advertising for consumer products, including FDA and FTC regulation, NAD, and other marketing and advertising regulation.

Gambling

- Counseled the owner of a casino on regulatory compliance and represented it in its transactional structuring and capitalization as it pursued one of a handful of concessions in the Commonwealth of Virginia.
- Counseled applicants on the regulatory requirements of obtaining a Virginia sports betting license.

In-House and General Corporate Experience

- Managed legal work related to a *Fortune* 200 consumer products company's strategy and business development, investor relations, procurement, manufacturing, sales, information services, and environmental and real estate departments for the cigarette, cigar, and smokeless tobacco divisions.
- Coordinated litigation and other legal work related to a tobacco MSA, working collaboratively with and, where necessary, adverse to various state attorneys general offices.
- Represented a structured financial leasing company in a federal breach of contract action against a large midwest public utility lessee.
- Managed legal work and associated compliance infrastructure related to European and Latin American tobacco and alcohol joint ventures and critical supply chains in China and Latin America.

RANKINGS AND RECOGNITION

- Virginia Rising Star, *Super Lawyers* (2007)
- Emerson G. Spies Award, Virginia Bar Association

PROFESSIONAL AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Board of Directors, Nicotine Resource Consortium (2026)
- Cannabis-Derived Products Committee, Food & Drug Law Institute
- Member, Law360 Cannabis Editorial Board (2022, 2023)
- Tobacco and Nicotine Products Committee, Food & Drug Law Institute (2021-2023)
- Mentor, Startup Virginia
- Board chair emeritus and director, Housing Opportunities Made Equal of Virginia, Inc.
- Secretary and director, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Foundation
- Director, Richmond SPCA
- President, Princeton Association of Virginia
- Trustee, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, 2007-2012
- Leadership Metro Richmond, Class of 2006

LANGUAGES

- Spanish

- Portuguese

EDUCATION

- The University of Chicago Law School, J.D., 1994
- Princeton School of Public and International Affairs, B.A., 1990
- Harvard Business School, Executive Education Program on Corporate Governance & Leadership in the Boardroom
- The University of Chicago Booth School of Business, Executive Education Program on Mergers and Acquisitions

BAR ADMISSIONS

- Virginia
- District of Columbia