Holland & Hart



PRACTICES

Environmental
Environmental Litigation

INDUSTRIES

Oil and Gas
Oil and Gas Litigation

EDUCATION

The George Washington University Law School, J.D., 2016
magna cum laude
Order of the Coif

Colby College, B.A., 2013
cum laude

BAR ADMISSIONS

Colorado
Texas

Michelle Seares

Partner

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Michelle specializes in resolving complex disputes for oil and gas and natural resource clients.

Michelle handles litigation in virtually all aspects of the energy industry, including royalty underpayment litigation, commercial disputes between industry parties, title issues, surface disputes, and disputes between working interest owners. She has extensive experience in defending oil and gas producers in cases filed as class actions.

Michelle litigates at both the trial and appellate levels in multiple energy-producing states. She also counsels clients undergoing audits by royalty and working interest owners, as well as assisting clients in drafting oil and gas and natural resource lease agreements.

Michelle also has extensive experience in responding to federal agency investigations and providing counsel to clients on other anti-corruption matters and related litigation.

EXPERIENCE

Michelle assists energy clients in litigation involving:

- Oil and Gas Royalty Disputes
- Class Action Defense
- Operational Disputes
- Surface Access and Title Matters
- Commercial Litigation

CLIENT RESULTS

- Successfully resolved class action alleging violation of Wyoming Royalty Payment Act in Wyoming federal court.
- Successfully defended district court judgment in high profile breach of contract and tort dispute on behalf of oil and gas producer before the Colorado Court of Appeals.
- Successfully resolved class action alleging royalty underpayment under Texas law.
- Successfully resolved class action alleging royalty underpayment under Colorado law.
- Successfully defended client at both trial and appellate level against royalty underpayment claims under North Dakota law.

- Successfully resolved leasing dispute between oil and gas producers.
- Successfully resolved quiet title action under North Dakota law.
- Successfully defended client against class action alleging royalty underpayment under New Mexico law.
- Successfully defended multimillion-dollar class action settlement against jurisdictional challenges raised by objectors in Colorado federal court.
- Successfully defended client in connection with U.S. Department of Justice investigation of tribal bribery issues.
- Successfully defended arbitration award under International Chamber of Commerce for oil and gas project in Cameroon.
- Successfully defended client against preliminary injunction in International Chamber of Commerce arbitration.

PUBLICATIONS

"Avoiding a Cline-Style Judgment: Mitigating class action risks of interest on late payments," *Landman*, Co-Author, January/February 2025

"Eighth Circuit Affirms Producer's Royalty Calculations Under North Dakota Law," *Holland & Hart News Update*, 08/09/2022

RECOGNITION

- *Chambers USA,* USA – Nationwide, Oil & Gas Litigation, Up and Coming, 2026
- *Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch® in America*, Energy Law, 2026, 2027; Oil and Gas Law, 2026, 2027; Environmental Law; Litigation - Environmental, 2024-2027