Holland & Hart



PRACTICES

Real Estate
Resorts and Hospitality
Stadiums, Arenas, and Sports Venue Operations
Government Contracts

INDUSTRIES

Construction and Development

EDUCATION

University of Maryland School of Law, J.D.

University of South Carolina, B.S.

Greenville Technical College, A.S.

BAR ADMISSIONS

Washington, DC
Maryland
Virginia

Mike Pappas

Of Counsel

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Mike leverages extensive in-house and C-suite experience at major resort, hospitality, and gaming companies to guide clients through complex development and operational challenges.

As in-house counsel and a senior leader, Mike served as a trusted advisor to executives and boards on matters involving significant capital investment and operational complexity. From his experience managing multi-billion dollar integrated resort developments, he understands the pressures clients face to balance legal protection with business goals and operational realities. He provides practical, solution-oriented guidance to help clients manage risk and execute strategic initiatives.

Mike's extensive contract negotiation experience—spanning hundreds of construction, commercial, and operational agreements during all phases of development—enables him to identify potential risks early and structure terms that protect clients while facilitating project success through dispute prevention strategies.

When disputes arise, Mike draws on his litigation experience across construction claims, employment matters, and gaming-related disputes to guide clients in resolving matters efficiently while protecting ongoing business relationships and operational continuity.

Mike's experience managing compliance functions—including gaming regulatory oversight, safety, audits, and multi-jurisdictional licensing—equips clients to navigate complex regulatory environments. His government relations experience also positions clients to secure regulatory approvals and address policy changes affecting their industries.

Before joining Holland & Hart, Mike served as Chief Administrative Officer and Co-General Counsel at Fontainebleau Development. He previously held senior legal positions at MGM Resorts International (MGM National Harbor) and Boyd Gaming (Wilton Rancheria-Sky River).

EXPERIENCE

Resort and Hospitality

- Resort and hotel development and operations
- Restaurant management and licensing agreements
- Entertainment venue operations and performance agreements
- Retail space leasing and concession agreements
- Corporate governance and executive management
- Labor relations and collective bargaining negotiations

- Captive insurance company formation and operations
- Risk Management and Litigation

Venue Operations

- Event licensing agreements for ticketed and private events
- Artist and entertainment contracts
- Food and beverage operations agreements
- Marina operations and commercial fishing ventures
- Airport FBO operations and aircraft fleet management
- Night-club management and operations
- Risk Management and Litigation

Gaming

- Gaming regulatory compliance and licensing
- Sports wagering operations and regulatory matters
- Multi-jurisdictional gaming authority relations
- Gaming customer disputes and debt collection
- Pre-opening gaming license applications

Construction and Development

- Large-scale integrated resort development projects
- Construction contract negotiation and management
- Real estate acquisition and development
- Master planning and mixed-use development
- Construction dispute resolution and claims management
- Project financing and development agreements
- Risk Management and Litigation

Government Contracts

- Federal and state government procurement matters
- Regulatory compliance and audit preparation
- Government relations and legislative advocacy
- Public testimony and regulatory comments
- Multi-jurisdictional regulatory oversight
- Government agency interaction and reporting

CLIENT RESULTS

Fontainebleau Development, LLC – Miami, FL
As Chief Administrative Officer & Co-General Counsel Mike:

- Led legal operations for multiple Fontainebleau properties including hotels, aviation, marine, development, and construction.

- Oversaw legal matters for $4.6B Fontainebleau Las Vegas development project.
- Negotiated complex commercial, construction, artist, and lease agreements.
- Directed regulatory compliance, human resources, information technology, and risk management functions.
- Reduced labor expenses by through collective bargaining while increasing wages for line employees.
- Managed internal and external litigation, including high-stakes construction and commercial disputes as well as employment disputes.

MGM Resorts International – National Harbor, MD
As Vice President, General Counsel, and Asst. Corp. Secretary (MGM National Harbor) Mike:

- Acted as General Counsel for MGM National Harbor Resort & Casino and MGM Resorts International Regional Operations
- Oversaw legal matters for $1.6 billion integrated resort development project in Maryland.
- Served as construction counsel for $1.2 billion integrated resort development project in Springfield, Massachusetts.
- Provided daily counsel and guidance to MGM National Harbor C-Suite and Executive Leadership regarding operations of resort.
- Acted as primary counsel for MGM Resorts Regional Operations' construction projects outside of Las Vegas.
- Negotiated construction contracts, commercial contracts, artist agreements, and theater agreements
- Provided counsel and guidance during labor contract negotiations.
- Negotiated and drafted commercial leases and corporate finance documents.
- Provided oversight and management of Vice President of Government Affairs and the government relations team.
- Provided oversight and management of Corporate Social Responsibility team.
- Provided oversight and management of Director of Regulatory Compliance and Compliance Department.
- Provided oversight and management of Director of Risk Management and Risk and Safety Department.
- Managed all phases of litigation including, discovery, and trial of civil legal actions.

Boyd Gaming - Wilton Rancheria Gaming Authority – Sacramento, CA
As Vice President & General Counsel of Sky River Casino Mike:

- Acted as General Counsel for Wilton Rancheria Gaming Authority during construction and pre-operation phase of casino resort

development project.

- Provided daily counsel and guidance to C-Suite and executive leadership regarding construction, regulatory compliance, and preparations for operations of resort.
- Negotiated complex construction contracts, commercial contracts, leases, restaurant management agreements, and license agreements.
- Provided oversight and management of Director of Regulatory Compliance and Compliance Department.
- Provided oversight and management of Director of Risk Management and Risk and Safety Department.

Big League Advance, LLC and JAMBOS Analytics, LLC – Potomac, MD
As General Counsel and Chief Legal Officer Mike:

- Established and maintained internationally domiciled sports-wagering subsidiaries in compliance with U.S. and foreign laws and regulations.
- Provided advice, guidance to C-Suite and executive leadership in all legal and regulatory matters.
- Negotiated complex commercial contracts, partnership, employment, data license, subscription, and vendor agreements.
- Negotiated and drafted commercial leases and complex finance documents.
- Directed domestic and international government affairs
- Provided oversight and management of regulatory compliance including audit preparation and response, regulatory oversight, and interaction with domestic and international regulatory authorities.

BLOG POSTS

"Data Centers and Community Benefit Agreements: A Win-Win Solution," *The Pulse*, October 01, 2026

"The Server Room Subsidy: How Data Center Revenue Can Liberate States From Income Tax Dependence," *The Pulse*, September 22, 2026

"From Vacant Warehouses to Data Halls: The Economic Case for Urban Industrial-to-Data Center Conversion," *The Pulse*, September 15, 2026

"AI Will Help Bridge the Education Gap, but It Needs Data Centers to Do That!," *The Pulse*, September 01, 2026

"The World Needs More Data Centers, Not Fewer," *The Pulse*, August 21, 2026

"Some States Poised to Address Energy Demand," *The Pulse*, July 28, 2026

PROFESSIONAL AND CIVIC AFFILIATIONS

- American University, Washington College of Law, Adjunct

Professor, Hospitality and Tourism; Gaming Law; Construction Law; Complex Contracts Drafting; 2017-present