



AREAS OF PRACTICE

Energy & Natural
Resources Law

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Joseph C. Reynolds is a partner with the firm, practicing primarily in the areas of energy and natural resources law, water rights, appellate law, constitutional law, administrative and regulatory law, criminal law, education law, and government affairs. For over 20 years, Joe has advocated and provided legal representation in hearings, bench trials, jury trials, and appeals in state and federal courts throughout Nevada.

Raised in Las Vegas, Joe graduated from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas with a Bachelor of Science undergraduate degree in Secondary Education. He later taught school in Glasgow, Scotland, and thereafter earned his law degree from Gonzaga University School of Law in Spokane, Washington. During Law School, Joe was nominated to serve on the Law School's National Appellate Moot Court Team and was a course tutor for United States Constitutional Law. He received the School's top honors for skills in oral arguments and drafting appellate briefs, as well as legal research and writing.

Joe was a Law Clerk to former Nevada Supreme Court Vice-Chief Justice, C. Clifton Young, and served for over five years as a Staff Attorney within the Criminal Division of the Nevada Supreme Court, where he assisted the Court with reviewing direct appeals, writ petitions, and post-conviction appeals, and with drafting procedural and dispositive unpublished orders and published opinions.

Joe served as a Senior Deputy District Attorney and Appellate Deputy for the Lyon County District Attorney's Office for three years, where he prosecuted criminal misdemeanor and felony crimes in county justice courts and district courts for offenses ranging from theft and driving under the influence of alcohol to first-degree murder. He trained office deputies on criminal procedure and has conducted numerous evidentiary hearings, bench trials, and jury trials. He handled juvenile, court-ordered child support, and elderly guardianship proceedings, as well as all direct appeals and post-conviction matters before the Nevada Supreme Court.

Joe also served three Nevada Attorneys General – Frankie Sue Del Papa, Brian Sandoval, and Catherine Cortez Masto. Under Attorneys General Del Papa and Sandoval, Joe represented the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, where he worked on issues involving the Nevada Division of Wildlife and the Bureau of Mining Regulation and Reclamation, including the listing of species under the Endangered Species Act, land use planning under the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA), and the issuance of mining and water permits.

Joe has also represented the Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) and the City of Fernley in water matters before the State Engineer and on appeal to the Nevada Supreme Court.

Later, under Attorney General Cortez Masto, Joe served as the Chief Deputy Attorney General for the Bureau of Litigation, Public Safety Division. As the Chief Deputy Attorney General, Joe oversaw the handling of all civil cases filed against Nevada constitutional officers and agencies, which alleged deprivation of civil rights pursuant to Title 42 U.S.C. §1983. He also advised and represented the Nevada Department of Public Safety, including the Nevada Highway Patrol, the Division of Parole and Probation, the Division of Investigations, the Department of Emergency Management, the State Fire Marshal, and the Nevada Board of Parole Commissioners. He also advised and represented the Nevada Department of Corrections and the Nevada Department of Motor Vehicles. In this role, he successfully briefed and argued a First Amendment case before the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

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Beginning in 2014, Joe served as the Deputy General Counsel for the Office of Governor Brian Sandoval and was thereafter promoted to serve as General Counsel. While serving as Governor Sandoval's General Counsel, Joe was the direct liaison to the Gaming Control Board, the Gaming Commission, the Public Utilities Commission, the State Ethics Commission, the Commission on Parole and Probation, the Department of Public Safety, the Nevada Department of Corrections, the Nevada Department of Transportation, the State Board of Transportation, and the Pardon's Board. Specific projects he worked on included the Tesla Gigafactory in Northern Nevada, the Allegiant Stadium in Southern Nevada, reformation of Nevada's Gaming Policy Committee to develop policies for E-Sports in the gaming industry, Nevada's Multi-State Gaming Agreement with Delaware and New Jersey, and the Nevada Department of Transportation's (NDOT) Statewide Stormwater Management Program with the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

Joe was appointed to serve as the Chairman of the Public Utilities Commission of Nevada (PUCN) by Governor Sandoval in 2016. As Nevada's top energy regulator, he oversaw the regulation of Nevada's \$17 billion utility infrastructure, which included the generation, transmission, and distribution of electricity throughout the State, as well as natural gas, telephone, wastewater, and natural gas. During his tenure as Chairman of the PUCN, Joe approved and implemented Nevada's current rooftop solar Net Energy Metering (NEM) program, electric vehicle infrastructure programs, and development of large-scale utility solar facilities. He also presided over multiple 'exit' applications filed by major Nevada corporations pursuant to NRS Chapter 704B, including those filed by Google, Switch, MGM Resorts, Wynn Las Vegas, Caesars Enterprise Services, and Peppermill Casino. Joe was the first Chairman of the PUCN in known Nevada history to approve a rate decrease for utility customers while expanding the development of solar energy.

Most recently, Joe has served as the Chief General Counsel for the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) and responsible for overseeing all legal affairs of the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR); the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV); the Desert Research Institute (DRI), as well as Nevada's state and community colleges. In addition to civil litigation, real estate transactions, and contract drafting, Joe worked on employment matters involving the Family Education Privacy Act (FERPA), the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), and Title IX of the Higher Education Act, which promises equal access and prohibits discrimination, against all individuals. He also worked closely on Nevada's Open Meeting Law, Nevada's Public Records Act, and redistricting and reapportionment of districts for elected officials pursuant to the Nevada Constitution. Of note, Joe performed extensive work on the development and lease agreement that led to the construction of the Kirk Kerkorian Medical Education Building for the UNLV School of Medicine and the historic affiliation agreement between UNR and Renown Health. During his time with NSHE, Joe was the Co-Chair of the First Amendment and Freedom of Expression Task Force.

Throughout his career, Joe has assisted with drafting multiple pieces of legislation, working with legislators during the legislative process, and testifying at both Assembly and Senate Committee hearings of the Nevada Legislature during regular and special legislative sessions. He is particularly proud of his work on Senate Bill 504 (2015), which established anti-bullying laws and a legal cause of action for students who are being bullied in public schools and the PUCN's implementation of Assembly Bill 405 (2017), which established Nevada's residential rooftop solar program.

Joe has been a member of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) and the Governor's Committee on Energy Choice. He has been featured as a panelist for the Harvard Law School Energy Forum and Environmental Policy Initiative in Washington, D.C.; a keynote speaker for the Southern Nevada Strong Coalition for Electric Vehicles in Las Vegas, Nevada; a keynote speaker for the Solar Energies Industry Association (SEIA) in Las Vegas, Nevada; a keynote speaker for the 21st Century Energy Transition Symposium in Fort Collins, Colorado; and participant in the National Governor's Association Ahead of the Curve: Innovation Experts Roundtable in San Jose, California. He authored the article About Your Public Utilities Commission, which was published in the January 2018 edition of the Nevada Lawyer Magazine.

Joe has served as a Bar Exam Grader for the Nevada State Bar since 2008. In 2014, he received the Service Above Self Award from the International Rotary Club. In 2016, he received the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Award from the Nevada National Guard, United States Department of Defense. In 2020, he was recognized by NSHE University Police Services for his commitment to public safety in higher education.

JOSEPH C. REYNOLDS (CONTINUED)

He enjoys coaching youth sports, reading, writing and recording music, spending time outdoors with his Labrador, and being with friends and family. Joe and his wife, Katie, who is also a Nevada lawyer, have five children and live in Reno.