

## Pilar M. Thomas

### Partner

Pilar Thomas is a partner in the firm's Energy, Environment & Natural Resources Practice Group. She focuses her practice on tribal renewable energy project development and finance, tribal economic development, federal Indian Law, and natural resource development.

Pilar assists clients with strategic legal advice on tribal energy policy and planning; clean energy and infrastructure project development and finance; federal and state energy regulatory, programs, and policy efforts; and federal requirements for tribal lands development. She has negotiated or assisted with agreements related to transmission lines, landfill gas, solar projects, a natural gas power plant, and mineral development on tribal lands. She serves as general counsel for several tribes, Section 17 and tribal business entities.

### Representative Matters

- Negotiate leases and right of ways for utility scale renewable projects
- Shepherd through federal regulatory process for land into trust decisions and related environmental reviews
- Draft HEARTH Act leasing regulations
- Draft tribal laws, regulations, and policies related to economic development, land use, and environmental review
- Tribal consultation practices
- Monitor, review, and draft comments on federal and state agency actions
- Monitor, review, and draft federal legislation related to tribal energy development

Prior to entering private practice, Pilar was the Deputy Director for the Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs at the US Department of Energy, where she was responsible for developing and implementing policy and program efforts within the department and federal government to achieve the office's policy objectives related to the promotion of energy development, electrification, and infrastructure improvement on tribal lands. She also is the former Deputy Solicitor of Indian Affairs for the US Department of the Interior; served as the Interim Attorney General and Chief of Staff to Chairwoman Herminia Frias of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe; and was a trial attorney in the US Department of Justice, Environmental and Natural Resources Division, Indian Resources Section.

### Legal Services

- Energy, Environment & Natural Resources



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### Tucson Office

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- [Electric Power & Gas Distribution](#)
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## **Education and Honors**

- University of New Mexico School of Law (J.D., *magna cum laude*, 2002)
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  - Indian Law Certificate
- Stanford University (B.A., 1983)

## **Bar Admissions**

- Arizona

## **Court Admissions**

- U.S. Court of Federal Claims
- U.S. District Court, District of Arizona
- U.S. Court of Appeals, 4th Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals, 9th Circuit

## **Professional and Civic Activities**

- Energy Bar Association (Member)
- Native American Bar Association of Arizona (Board Member)
- Native American Bar Association of DC (Member)
- National Native American Bar Association (Member)
- Federal Bar Association (Member)
- Rocky Mountain Mineral Law Foundation (Trustee-at-Large)
- American Bar Association, Native American Resources Committee (Chair)
- GRID Alternatives (Board Member)

## **Professional Recognition**

- Selected for inclusion in Best Lawyers in America® (2017-present: Native American Law)
- Listed in *Chambers USA*® (2018-present: Native American Law)