



Amy K. Tchao
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Bio

Amy Tchao is the Leader of the firm’s Municipal Law Practice Group and has over twenty-five years of experience advising municipalities and other public clients on a broad range of municipal issues, including land use permitting and enforcement, zoning compliance (including shoreland zoning matters), ordinance drafting (including zoning/land use ordinances and other ordinances governing short-term rentals, impact fees and other specialty areas), cannabis regulation, elections, freedom of information requests, property tax and assessment matters, review of contracts, and municipal governance issues. Amy serves as general counsel for several Maine municipalities, and has served as special counsel, too. She also represents municipalities before local and state boards and permitting authorities, and state and federal courts. Amy has also been recognized by national and regional publications which rate municipal lawyers such as Best Lawyers and Martindale Hubbell.

Practice Areas

Environmental & Natural Resources
Land Use & Conservation
Municipal Law
School & Education
Disability Law

Admissions

Maine
New Hampshire
U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit
U.S. District Court for the District of Maine

Amy has substantial experience resolving complex problems involving shorefront development, access and permitting issues. For example, Amy represented a municipality in complex, multi-year, multi-party litigation over public beach access and recreation rights, including appearing before the Maine Supreme Judicial Court. As town attorney, she successfully negotiated a land-use agreement between hundreds of private property owners and the town ensuring public recreational access and ongoing management of the beach resource. She has also drafted ordinances for beach management and use and license agreements for public use of privately owned shorefront resources, handled dock and wharf permitting disputes, and provided guidance to coastal towns on public access and ongoing use issues. Amy has presented at several workshops and conferences on topics related to public access to Maine's coastal areas.

In her free time, Amy enjoys being active and exploring the outdoors with her family, skiing, boating, hiking, surfing, cooking, traveling, eating and cooking Asian and other ethnic foods. She also enjoys playing guitar (and occasionally making music with her daughters when they let her). She has coached youth girls' lacrosse for 10 years, and currently serves on the Board of the Kennebunkport Climate Initiative, a nationwide non-profit organization dedicated to empowering youth voices in Maine and across the country for climate action through education and activism.

Education

University of Maine School of Law, J.D., *summa cum laude*, 1993

Dartmouth College, B.A., *magna cum laude*, *Phi Beta Kappa*, 1986

Recognition

Litigation – Municipal Lawyer of the Year, Portland, ME (Awarded by Best Lawyers) 2014, 2022, 2024

Education Law Lawyer of the Year, Portland, ME (Awarded by Best Lawyers) 2012, 2016, 2018

Best Lawyers, USA, Municipal Law, Litigation -Municipal, Education Law

Martindale Hubbell, BV Distinguished

Memberships

Maine State Bar Association

Maine Council of School Board Attorneys
Executive Committee Member and Past President

New Hampshire Bar Association

Community/Public Service

Kennebunkport Climate Initiative

Current Board Member

Maine Women's Fund

Former Board Member and Executive Committee Member

Planned Parenthood of Northern New England

Former Board Member