Seizing on the momentum of greater bilateral diplomatic and commercial relations between the United States and Cuba, Clark Hill announces the launch of Cuba Practice.

On December 17, 2014, the Obama Administration announced its plan to re-establish diplomatic relations with Cuba. Along with its intention to restore diplomatic relations with the island, the Obama administration announced it would begin to issue regulations which would promote greater commercial interaction and increase travel opportunities between both countries.

Since the diplomatic opening, U.S. government officials and representatives of U.S. business have wasted no time in exploring opportunities on the island. Delegations of U.S. agricultural interests, manufacturers, telecommunications providers, and other industries have begun to explore opportunities allowed by current regulations. It is important to note that with the U.S. trade embargo still in place, many commercial opportunities remain prohibited. Yet, the diplomatic opening and corresponding regulatory changes provide greater opportunities for some authorized parties. For others, the diplomatic opening has provided the impetus to begin to explore opportunities in a post-embargo Cuba as well as begin to build relationships and institutional knowledge about doing business on the island.

Key commercial developments since the announced diplomatic opening include:

- Four U.S. governors have visited the island. New York Governor Andrew Cuomo, Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson, Texas Governor Greg Abbot, and most recently Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe
- Sprint became the first U.S. wireless carrier to sign a direct roaming agreement to provide services in Cuba
- Airbnb has launched its online lodging business in Cuba, growing its business on the island to 3,000 listings
- Netflix has made its content available on the island
- Florida based Stonegate Bank has obtained approval to become the first U.S. bank to set up a correspondent banking relationship with Cuba
- Mastercard, in partnership with Stonegate Bank, has become the first U.S. company to offer a debit card which can be used in Cuba
- Carnival Corp. has received approval from the U.S. government to operate cruises to Cuba
- Representatives from Major League Baseball and the National Basketball Association have visited the island.

Members of the Clark Hill Cuba Practice have:

- Led legal delegation to Cuba, and participated in discussions and meetings with representatives, practitioners, and officials of the Cuban legal system and relevant Cuban government ministries.
- Participated in high level U.S. commercial delegation to Cuba and undertaken meetings with U.S. private sector representatives and Cuban Government officials.
- Attended major Cuban international commercial trade fair with participants from more than 80 countries.
- Participated in discussions regarding regulatory, commercial, and legal issues with U.S. and Cuban government officials.
- Presented to and briefed audiences regarding Cuba related issues.

Members of the Clark Hill Cuba Practice are prepared to assist U.S. businesses and individuals with:

- Interpreting State, Treasury and Commerce Department regulations as relate to permitted commercial activity in Cuba
- Obtaining requisite licenses and permits from U.S. government entities including the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) and Department of Commerce
- Developing and implementing a comprehensive legislative and regulatory advocacy strategy as relates to current and forthcoming Federal Government actions related to Cuba policy
- Facilitating interaction and communication between Cuban government and business entities regarding authorized transactions by U.S. entities
- Providing specialized research and analysis regarding political, legislative, regulatory, and commercial developments in the United States and Cuba
- Advising U.S. corporation on all aspects of the import and export process including export licensing.

As the U.S. government continue to release guidance and implementing regulations regarding Cuba, U.S. based entities should remain vigilant as to how these changes could impact their business priorities. Please do not
hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or concerns as you begin to examine such regulations.