

2015's **TOP 100** Lawyers in California

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RUTH E. FISHER

GIBSON, DUNN & CRUTCHER LLP | LOS ANGELES | MEDIA, ENTERTAINMENT

Fisher, co-chairwoman of Gibson Dunn's media, entertainment and technology practice, recently represented DirecTV LLC in an exclusive eight-year agreement with the National Football League to continue and expand the satellite provider's rights to carry "NFL Sunday Ticket," which distributes out-of-market NFL games to DirecTV subscribers for up to \$350 during the NFL season. DirecTV will reportedly pay \$1.5 billion per year to keep the popular feature that also allows subscribers to stream content on mobile devices.

The deal has already spurred a wave of antitrust class actions by subscribers alleging the 32 separately owned NFL teams are colluding with each other to grant the NFL the exclusive right to market games outside each team's home market. If the plaintiffs are successful, the outcome of the suit could have far-reaching implications.

Fisher, who isn't involved in the litigation, noted that the deal is very important to DirecTV's business, as it allows the company to increase subscriptions in a time when cable operators have continued to lose business. Fisher said distributors won't stop looking to distinguish themselves with exclusive content offerings. "I think every major distributor is trying to create unique content, or acquire that unique content," Fisher said, highlighting HBO, as well as Internet-streaming services Netflix and Amazon Prime.

The use of digital production techniques has also affected many in the entertainment industry. "It's sort of amazing, but 15 years ago, people mostly filmed movies on film. There's virtually no film now."

Companies like Technicolor SA, a client of Fisher's, have changed their business from processing print film to digital files. She expects the transformation to continue.

"I think media is a hot sector and I think it will continue to be a hot sector for investment and consolidation."

>> **Hetert-Qebu Walters**

