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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

ETHICS COMMISSION RESOLVES INVESTIGATION OF TURNPIKE COMMISSION CHAIR WITH CUYAHOGA COUNTY PROSECUTOR

The Ohio Ethics Commission has concluded its examination and investigation into two ethics issues relating to the Chairman of the Ohio Turnpike Commission, Umberto Fedeli, finding no evidence of ethics or reporting requirements violations, but requiring that additional financial disclosure be provided by Fedeli. The Ethics Commission reviewed its investigation and conclusions with the Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office, who serves as the Commission's appropriate prosecutor.

The Ethics Commission found that 26 businesses who did, or sought to do, business with the Turnpike Commission during 1996 were also clients to Fedeli's insurance agency. However, in interviews with 33 separate witnesses, and after examining stacks of documents, the Commission found no evidence to support violations of Ohio's conflict of interest statutes by Fedeli. In conducting the investigation, the Ethics Commission also met with representatives of the Cuyahoga County Prosecutor and United States Attorney's Office to solicit any additional information that they could provide that was relevant to the conflict of interest allegations.

Interviews of those who were doing or seeking to do business with the Turnpike Commission, who were also clients of Fedeli's insurance agency, revealed that none were promised or offered work with the Commission as a result of using Fedeli's services. None of the witnesses stated that they were promised, nor was it suggested, nor did they receive, Turnpike Commission work as a result of being a client of Fedeli's. Many businesses had performed work for the Turnpike Commission prior to Fedeli's membership on the Commission. In addition, and importantly, the investigation revealed that Fedeli abstained from matters involving business clients who came before the Turnpike Commission, did not provide insurance bonds for clients on any work directly performed for the Turnpike Commission, and did not otherwise participate in the selection process of Turnpike

Commission vendors who were also his insurance clients.

With regard to the second issue of financial disclosure, Fedeli will file an agreed to addenda to financial disclosure statements filed for calendar years 1994 and 1995, previously completed upon advice of his counsel and advisers, and to file a statement for calendar year 1996, prior to August 1, 1997. These filings will fully disclose the identity of all sources of income and the amount of income received from these sources, including his business clients, who were also doing or seeking to do business with the Turnpike Commission during the year in question. The provision of this information is required under changes that were enacted by the General Assembly in 1994 to increase the level of public disclosure for many public officials, including state board and commission members who are required to file statements, except for those serving as trustees of colleges or universities.