



Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

OHIO ETHICS COMMISSION ISSUES ADVISORY OPINIONS

At its meeting today, the Ohio Ethics Commission issued three advisory opinions, including one to the office of Governor John Kasich.

In that opinion, the Commission stated that if the Governor were to appoint the current Director of the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) to the position of Director of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) there would be few limitations on the new director in the performance of his duties. The Commission said that if the ODA Director were to become the ODNR Director, although he would be prohibited from representing ONDR before any public agency on any matter in which he personally participated as ODA Director for one year after leaving ODA, a public official has not “personally participated” in a matter if his involvement was limited to attending meetings to gather or share information or if the public official’s activities related to the proposal, consideration, or enactment of statutes or rules. The Commission noted that the director would be prohibited from disclosing or using confidential information he acquired as ODA Director unless appropriately authorized to do so.

A separate opinion was issued to Peter Silverman, a member of the Ohio Casino Control Commission (CCC). The opinion responded to whether or not an attorney from Mr. Silverman’s firm may provide legal services on specialized issues related to the casino in Toledo where Mr. Silverman’s law firm is based. The opinion states that the Ethics Law prohibits any member of the CCC from directly or indirectly having an interest in a contractual or service relationship with the casino facility, casino operator, management or holding companies, or gaming-related vendor. Because Mr. Silverman has both direct and indirect interests in the contracts and services provided by the law firm of which he is a partner, the firm cannot provide legal services to any of these parties.

The final opinion determined that a public official or employee, who is not in a position to

negotiate or authorize a public agency's contract with a vendor, may accept discounts on goods from the vendor. The opinion also asserted, however, that such discounts may be accepted by public official or employees only if the vendor offers the same discount to all eligible officials or employees of the agency as well as all of the vendor's other customers and if the vendor does not offer the discounts in exchange for the performance of the officials' or employees' official duties. The opinion is attached [here](#).

In other business, the Commission reviewed Financial Disclosure statistics and complaint reports and received an update on Commission public outreach and communication efforts. Finally, in executive session, the Commission heard a confidential report on complaints and pending investigations concerning alleged violations of the Ethics Law and related statutes and litigation.