

SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
STATEMENT OF INCOMPATIBLE ACTIVITIES

I. INTRODUCTION

This Statement of Incompatible Activities is intended to guide officers and employees of the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (“Department” or “PUC”), the PUC Revenue Bond Oversight Committee (“Committee”), the PUC Rate Fairness Board (“Board”), and the Residential Users Appeals Board (“Appeals Board”) about the kinds of activities that are incompatible with their public duties and therefore prohibited. For the purposes of this Statement, and except where otherwise provided, “officer” shall mean a member of the Public Utilities Commission, the Committee, the Board, or the Appeals Board and the General Manager of the PUC; and “employee” shall mean all employees of the Department.

This Statement is adopted under the provisions of San Francisco Campaign & Governmental Conduct Code (“C&GC Code”) section 3.218. Engaging in the activities that are prohibited by this Statement may subject an officer or employee to discipline, up to and including possible termination of employment or removal from office, as well as to monetary fines and penalties. (C&GC Code § 3.242; Charter § 15.105.) Before an officer or employee is subjected to discipline or penalties for violation of this Statement, the officer or employee will have an opportunity to explain why the activity should not be deemed to be incompatible with his or her City duties. (C&GC Code § 3.218.) Nothing in this document shall modify or reduce any due process rights provided pursuant to the officer’s or employee’s collective bargaining agreement.

In addition to this Statement, officers and employees are subject to Department policies and State and local laws and rules governing the conduct of public officers and employees, including but not limited to:

- Political Reform Act, California Government Code § 87100 *et seq.*;
- California Government Code § 1090;
- San Francisco Charter;
- San Francisco Campaign and Governmental Conduct Code;
- San Francisco Sunshine Ordinance;
- Applicable Civil Service Rules; and
- ***San Francisco Administrative Code §§ 5.30-5.36.***

Nothing in this Statement shall exempt any officer or employee from applicable provisions of law, or limit his or her liability for violations of law. Examples provided in this Statement are for illustration purposes only, and are not intended to limit application of this Statement. Nothing in this Statement shall interfere with the rights of employees under a collective bargaining agreement or Memorandum of Understanding applicable to that employee.

Nothing in this Statement shall be construed to prohibit or discourage any City officer or employee from bringing to the City’s and/or public’s attention matters of actual or perceived malfeasance or misappropriation in the conduct of City business, or from filing a complaint alleging that a City officer or employee has engaged in improper governmental activity by violating local campaign finance, lobbying, conflicts of interest or governmental ethics laws, regulations or rules; violating the California Penal Code by misusing City resources; creating a specified and substantial danger to public health or safety by failing to perform duties required by the officer’s or employee’s City position; or abusing his or her City position to advance a private interest.

No amendment to any Statement of Incompatible Activities shall become operative until the City and County has satisfied the meet and confer requirements of State law and the collective bargaining agreement.

If an employee has questions about this Statement, the questions should be directed to the employee's supervisor or to the General Manager. Similarly, questions about other applicable laws governing the conduct of public employees should be directed to the employee's supervisor or the General Manager, although the supervisor or General Manager may determine that the question must be addressed to the Ethics Commission or City Attorney. Employees may also contact their unions for advice or information about their rights and responsibilities under these and other laws.

If a City officer has questions about this Statement, the questions should be directed to the officer's appointing authority, the Ethics Commission or the City Attorney.

II. MISSION OF THE SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION, THE PUC BOND OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE THE PUC RATE FAIRNESS BOARD AND RESIDENTIAL USERS APPEALS BOARD

The mission of the PUC is to serve San Francisco and its Bay Area customers with reliable, high quality and affordable water, while maximizing benefits from power operations and responsibly managing the resources entrusted to its care.

Under Charter Article VIII B: Public Utilities, the PUC has exclusive control of water, wastewater and power assets owned or maintained by the City. To reach that goal, the Charter gives the PUC a number of specific powers: a) authority to enter into joint powers agreements; b) authority to issue revenue bonds; c) authority to set rates; d) authority to enter into individual employment contracts with the General Manager and a deputy director; e) authority to enter into contract for the purchase or sale of water; f) authority to enter into project labor agreements for the Capital Improvement Project; and g) authority to transfer surplus revenues between utilities.

The mission of the Revenue Bond Oversight Committee is to review and report on the expenditure of proceeds of revenue bond proceeds issued by the PUC. (SF Admin. Code §§ 5.30-5.36.)

The mission of the Rate Fairness Board is to review the five-year rate forecast of the PUC and prepare rate policy recommendations for the PUC's consideration, including recommendations to reallocate costs among various retail utility customer classifications, subject to any outstanding bond requirements. (Charter § 8B.125.)

The mission of the Residential Users Appeals Board is to provide residential users, who are dissatisfied with the department's wastewater volume (flow factor) calculations, an opportunity to have a public hearing in front of an independent appeals board. The Board is to determine the correctness of the Department's calculation of the volume of wastewater discharged in the City's sewer system for the purpose of assessing residential appellant's wastewater service charges. (Public Works Code, Art. 4.2, §§ 149.1-149.4.)

III. RESTRICTIONS ON INCOMPATIBLE ACTIVITIES

This section prohibits outside activities, including self-employment, that are incompatible with the mission of the Department, the Committee, the Board and the Appeals Board. Under subsection C, an officer or employee may seek an advance written determination whether a proposed outside activity is incompatible and therefore prohibited by this Statement. Outside activities other than those expressly identified here may be determined to be incompatible and therefore prohibited. For an advance written determination request from an employee, if the General Manager delegates the decision-making to a designee and if the designee determines that the proposed activity is incompatible under this Statement, the employee may appeal that determination to the General Manager.

A. RESTRICTIONS THAT APPLY TO ALL OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES

1. ACTIVITIES THAT CONFLICT WITH OFFICIAL DUTIES

No officer or employee may engage in an outside activity (regardless of whether the activity is compensated) that conflicts with his or her City duties. An outside activity conflicts with City duties when the ability of the officer or employee to perform the duties of his or her City position is materially impaired. Outside activities that materially impair the ability of an officer or employee to perform his or her City duties include, but are not limited to, activities that disqualify the officer or employee from City assignments or responsibilities on a regular basis. Unless (a) otherwise noted in this section or (b) an advance written determination under subsection C concludes that such activities are not incompatible, the following activities are expressly prohibited by this section.

a. No officer or employee may directly or indirectly solicit or accept personal loans (other than loans from commercial lending institutions made in the lender's regular course of business on terms available to members of the public without regard to the officer's or employee's official status), gifts, gratuities, business, compensation, or favors from public jurisdictions, water or power agencies, private business firms or their agents that have a contract with the PUC, that have had a contract with the PUC during the past 12 months, or that are seeking to enter into a contract with the PUC.

b. Except as authorized by Charter, no officer or employee may contract with the PUC, or any of its enterprises, bureaus or departments, in any capacity. This prohibition does not apply to employment of or compensation received by an officer's or employee's spouse or registered domestic partner.

c. No officer or employee may be a registered lobbyist (as defined in the San Francisco Campaign and Governmental Conduct Code), or be employed by a registered lobbyist, or receive or accept compensation from such a registered lobbyist involved in activities directly related to the PUC's water, power or wastewater enterprise programs. This prohibition does not apply to employment of or compensation received by an officer's or employee's spouse or registered domestic partner.

2. ACTIVITIES WITH EXCESSIVE TIME DEMANDS

Neither the General Manager nor any employee may engage in outside activity (regardless of whether the activity is compensated) that would cause the General Manager or employee to be absent from his or her assignments on a regular basis, or otherwise require a time commitment

that is demonstrated to interfere with the General Manager's or employee's performance of his or her City duties.

Example. An employee wants to take time off every Tuesday and Thursday from 2:00 to 5:00 to attend classes offered by a vocational or educational institution in a field unrelated to the employee's position or career path in the PUC. Because the employee's duties require the employee to be at on-site during regular business hours and because this outside activity would require the employee to be absent from the office during regular business hours on a regular basis, the General Manager or his/her designee may, pursuant to subsection C, determine that the employee may not engage in this activity.

3. ACTIVITIES THAT ARE SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY THE DEPARTMENT

Unless (a) otherwise noted in this section or (b) an advance written determination under subsection C concludes that such activities are not incompatible, no officer or employee may engage in an outside activity (regardless of whether the activity is compensated) that is subject to the control, inspection, review, audit or enforcement of the Department. In addition to any activity permitted pursuant to subsection C, nothing in this subsection prohibits the following activities: appearing before one's own department or commission on behalf of oneself; filing or otherwise pursuing claims against the City on one's own behalf; running for City elective office; or making a public records disclosure request pursuant to the Sunshine Ordinance or Public Records Act. Unless (a) otherwise noted in this section or (b) an advance written determination under subsection C concludes that such activities are not incompatible, the following activities are expressly prohibited by this section:

Assistance in Responding to City Bids, RFQs and RFPs. No officer or employee may knowingly provide selective assistance (i.e., assistance that is not generally available to all competitors) to individuals or entities in a manner that confers a competitive advantage on a bidder or proposer who is competing for a City contract. Nothing in this Statement prohibits an officer or employee from providing general information about a bid for a City contract, a Department Request for Qualifications or Request for Proposals or corresponding application process that is available to any member of the public. Nothing in this Statement prohibits an officer or employee from speaking to or meeting with individual applicants regarding the individual's application, provided that such assistance is provided on an impartial basis to all applicants who request it.

B. RESTRICTIONS THAT APPLY TO EMPLOYEES AND BOARD/COMMITTEE MEMBERS IN SPECIFIED POSITIONS

In addition to the restrictions that apply to all officers and employees of the Department, unless (a) otherwise noted in this section or (b) an advance written determination under subsection C concludes that such activities are not incompatible, the following activities are expressly prohibited by this section for individual officers and employees holding specific positions.

1. MEMBERS OF THE BOND OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE, RATE FAIRNESS BOARD, OR RESIDENTIAL USERS APPEALS BOARD

a. No member of the Committee, Board, or Appeals Board may be employed by or receive compensation from any vendor, contractor or consultant of the City that performs work funded by bonds issued by the City, PUC revenue bonds or other forms of PUC indebtedness. This prohibition does not apply to employment or compensation received by a member's spouse or registered domestic partner.

b. No member of the Committee, Board, or Appeals Board may be employed by or receive any compensation or benefit from any party serving as an initial purchaser or underwriter of PUC revenue bonds or other forms of PUC indebtedness. This prohibition does not apply to employment of or compensation received by a member's spouse or registered domestic partner.

c. No member of the Committee, Board, or Appeals Board may directly own any PUC revenue bonds or other forms of indebtedness; provided, however, that PUC revenue or other forms of PUC indebtedness indirectly held in a non-directed mutual fund shall not be deemed to violate these provisions.

C. ADVANCE WRITTEN DETERMINATION

As set forth below, an employee of the Department or the General Manager or a member of the Public Utilities Commission, Committee, Board or Appeals Board may seek an advance written determination whether a proposed outside activity conflicts with the mission of the Department, imposes excessive time demands, is subject to review by the Department, or is otherwise incompatible and therefore prohibited by section III of this Statement. For the purposes of this section, an employee or other person seeking an advance written determination shall be called “the requestor”; the individual or entity that provides an advance written determination shall be called “the decision-maker.”

1. PURPOSE

This subsection permits an officer or employee to seek an advance written determination regarding his or her obligations under subsections A or B of this section. A written determination by the decision-maker that an activity is not incompatible under subsection A or B provides the requestor immunity from any subsequent enforcement action for a violation of this Statement if the material facts are as presented in the requestor's written submission. A written determination cannot exempt the requestor from any applicable law.

If an individual has not requested an advance written determination under subsection C as to whether an activity is incompatible with this Statement, and the individual engages in that activity, the individual will not be immune from any subsequent enforcement action brought pursuant to this Statement.

Similarly, if an individual has requested an advance written determination under subsection C as to whether an activity is incompatible with this Statement, and the individual engages in that activity, the individual will not be immune from any subsequent enforcement action brought pursuant to this Statement if:

- (a) the requestor is an *employee* who has not received a determination under subsection C from the decision-maker, and 20 working days have not yet elapsed since the request was made; or
- (b) the requestor is an *officer* who has not received a determination under subsection C from the decision-maker; or
- (c) the requestor has received a determination under subsection C that an activity is incompatible.

In addition to the advance written determination process set forth below, the San Francisco Charter also permits any person to seek a written opinion from the Ethics Commission with

respect to that person's duties under provisions of the Charter or any City ordinance relating to conflicts of interest and governmental ethics. Any person who acts in good faith on an opinion issued by the Commission and concurred in by the City Attorney and District Attorney is immune from criminal or civil penalties for so acting, provided that the material facts are as stated in the opinion request. Nothing in this subsection precludes a person from requesting a written opinion from the Ethics Commission regarding that person's duties under this Statement.

2. THE DECISION-MAKER

Decision-maker for request by an employee: An employee of the Department may seek an advance written determination from the General Manager or his or her designee. The General Manager or his or her designee will be deemed the decision-maker for the employee's request.

Decision-maker for request by the General Manager: The General Manager may seek an advance written determination from his or her appointing authority. The appointing authority will be deemed the decision-maker for the General Manager's request.

Decision-maker for request by a member of the Public Utilities Commission: A member of the Public Utilities Commission may seek an advance written determination from his or her appointing authority or from his or her commission, or the Ethics Commission. The appointing authority, Public Utilities Commission or Ethics Commission will be deemed the decision-maker for the member's request.

Decision-maker for request by a member of the Committee: A member of the Committee may seek an advance written determination from his or her appointing authority or from his or her committee, or the Ethics Commission. The appointing authority, Committee or Ethics Commission will be deemed the decision-maker for the member's request.

Decision-maker for request by a member of the Board: A member of the Board may seek an advance written determination from his or her appointing authority or from his or her board, or the Ethics Commission. The appointing authority, Board or Ethics Commission will be deemed the decision-maker for the member's request.

Decision-maker for request by a member of the Appeals Board: A member of the Appeals Board may seek an advance written determination from his or her appointing authority or from his or her board, or the Ethics Commission. The appointing authority, Appeals Board or Ethics Commission will be deemed the decision-maker for the member's request.

3. THE PROCESS

The requestor must provide, in writing, a description of the proposed activity and an explanation of why the activity is not incompatible under this Statement. The written material must describe the proposed activity in sufficient detail for the decision-maker to make a fully informed determination whether it is incompatible under this Statement.

When making a determination under this subsection, the decision-maker may consider any relevant factors including, but not limited to, the impact on the requestor's ability to perform his or her job, the impact upon the Department as a whole, compliance with applicable laws and rules and the spirit and intent of this Statement. The decision-maker shall consider all relevant written materials submitted by the requestor. The decision-maker shall also consider whether the written material provided by the requestor is sufficiently specific and detailed to enable the decision-maker to make a fully informed determination. The decision-maker may request additional information from the requestor if the decision-maker deems such

information necessary. For an advance written determination request from an employee, if the General Manager delegates the decision-making to a designee and if the designee determines that the proposed activity is incompatible under this Statement, the employee may appeal that determination to the General Manager.

The decision-maker shall respond to the request by providing a written determination to the requestor by mail, email, personal delivery, or other reliable means. For a request by an employee, the decision-maker shall provide the determination within a reasonable period of time depending on the circumstances and the complexity of the request, but not later than 20 working days from the date of the request. If the decision-maker does not provide a written determination to the employee within 20 working days from the date of the employee's request, the proposed activity will be determined not to violate this Statement.

The decision-maker may revoke the determination at any time based on changed facts or circumstances or other good cause, by providing advance written notice to the requestor. The written notice shall specify the changed facts or circumstances or other good cause that warrants revocation of the advance written determination.

4. DETERMINATIONS ARE PUBLIC RECORDS

To assure that these rules are enforced equally, requests for advance written determinations and written determinations, including approvals and denials, are public records to the extent permitted by law.

IV. RESTRICTIONS ON USE OF CITY RESOURCES, CITY WORK-PRODUCT AND PRESTIGE

A. USE OF CITY RESOURCES

No officer or employee may use City resources, including, without limitation, facilities, telephone, computer, copier, fax machine, e-mail, internet access, stationery and supplies, for any non-City purpose, including any political activity or personal purpose. No officer or employee may allow any other person to use City resources, including, without limitation, facilities, telephone, computer, copier, fax machine, e-mail, internet access, stationery and supplies, for any non-City purpose, including any political activity or personal purpose. Notwithstanding these general prohibitions, any incidental and minimal use of City resources does not constitute a violation of this section. Nothing in this subsection shall be interpreted or applied to interfere with, restrict or supersede any rights or entitlements of employees, recognized employee organizations, or their members under state law or regulation or pursuant to provisions of a collective bargaining agreement to use City facilities, equipment or resources, as defined herein.

Example. An officer or employee may use the telephone to make occasional calls to arrange medical appointments or speak with a child care provider, because this is an incidental and minimal use of City resources for a personal purpose.

Nothing in this Statement shall exempt any officer or employee from complying with more restrictive policies of the Department regarding use of City resources, including, without limitation, the Department's e-mail policy.

B. USE OF CITY WORK-PRODUCT

No officer or employee may, in exchange for anything of value and without appropriate authorization, sell, publish or otherwise use any non-public materials that were prepared on City time or while using City facilities, property (including without limitation, intellectual

property), equipment and/or materials. For the purpose of this prohibition, appropriate authorization includes authorization granted by law, including the Sunshine Ordinance, California Public Records Act, the Ralph M. Brown Act as well as whistleblower and improper government activities provisions, or by a supervisor of the officer or employee, including but not limited to the officer's or employee's appointing authority. Nothing in this subsection shall be interpreted or applied to interfere with, restrict or supersede any rights or entitlements of employees, recognized employee organizations, or their members under state law or regulation or pursuant to provisions of a collective bargaining agreement to use public materials for collective bargaining agreement negotiations.

C. USE OF PRESTIGE OF THE OFFICE

No officer or employee may use his or her City title or designation in any communication for any private gain or advantage. The following activities are expressly prohibited by this section.

1. USING CITY BUSINESS CARDS

No officer or employee may use his or her City business cards for any purpose that may lead the recipient of the card to think that the officer or employee is acting in an official capacity when the officer or employee is not.

Example of inappropriate use. An employee's friend is having a dispute with his new neighbor who is constructing a fence that the friend believes encroaches on his property. The friend invites the employee over to view the disputed fence. When the neighbor introduces herself, the employee should not hand the neighbor her business card while suggesting that she could help resolve the dispute. Use of a City business card under these circumstances might lead a member of the public to believe that the employee was acting in an official capacity.

Example of acceptable use. An employee is at a party and runs into an old friend who has just moved to town. The friend suggests meeting for dinner and asks how to get in touch with the employee to set up a meeting time. The employee hands the friend the employee's business card and says that he can be reached at the number on the card. Use of a City business card under these circumstances would not lead a member of the public to believe that the employee was acting in an official capacity. Nor would use of the telephone to set up a meeting time constitute a misuse of resources under subsection A, above.

2. USING CITY LETTERHEAD, CITY TITLE, OR E-MAIL

No officer or employee may use City letterhead, City title, City e-mail, or any other City resource, for any communication that may lead the recipient of the communication to think that the officer or employee is acting in an official capacity when the officer or employee is not. (Use of e-mail or letterhead in violation of this section could also violate subsection A of this section, which prohibits use of these resources for any non-City purpose.)

Example. An officer or employee is contesting a parking ticket. The officer or employee should not send a letter on City letterhead to the office that issued the ticket contesting the legal basis for the ticket.

3. HOLDING ONESELF OUT, WITHOUT AUTHORIZATION, AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DEPARTMENT

No officer or employee may hold himself or herself out as a representative of the Department, or as an agent acting on behalf of the Department, unless authorized to do so.

Example. An employee who lives in San Francisco wants to attend a public meeting of a Commission that is considering a land use matter that will affect the employee's neighborhood. The employee may attend the meeting and speak during public comment, but should make clear that he is speaking in his private capacity and not as a representative of the Department.

V. PROHIBITION ON GIFTS FOR ASSISTANCE WITH CITY SERVICES

State and local law place monetary limits on the value of gifts an officer or employee may accept in a calendar year. (Political Reform Act, Gov't Code § 89503, C&GC Code §§ 3.1-101 and 3.216.) This section imposes additional limits by prohibiting an officer or employee from accepting any gift that is given in exchange for doing the officer's or employee's City job.

No officer or employee may receive or accept gifts from anyone other than the City for the performance of a specific service or act the officer or employee would be expected to render or perform in the regular course of his or her City duties; or for advice about the processes of the City directly related to the officer's or employee's duties and responsibilities, or the processes of the entity they serve.

Example. A member of the public who regularly works with and receives assistance from the Department owns season tickets to the Giants and sends a pair of tickets to an employee of the Department in appreciation for the employee's work. Because the gift is given for the performance of a service the employee is expected to perform in the regular course of City duties, the employee is not permitted to accept the tickets.

Example. A member of the public requests assistance in resolving an issue or complaint that is related to the City and County of San Francisco, but that does not directly involve the Department. The employee directs the member of the public to the appropriate department and officer to resolve the matter. The member of the public offers the employee a gift in appreciation for this assistance. The employee may not accept the gift, or anything of value from anyone other than the City, for providing this kind of assistance with City services.

As used in this Statement, the term gift has the same meaning as under the Political Reform Act, including the Act's exceptions to the gift limit. (See Gov't Code §§ 82028, 89503; 2 Cal. Code Regs. §§ 18940-18950.4.) For example, under the Act, a gift that, within 30 days of receipt, is returned, or donated by the officer or employee to a 501(c)(3) organization or federal, state or local government without the officer or employee taking a tax deduction for the donation, will not be deemed to have been accepted. In addition to the exceptions contained in the Act, nothing in this Statement shall preclude an employee's receipt of a bona fide award, or free admission to a testimonial dinner or similar event, to recognize exceptional service by that employee, and which is not provided in return for the rendering of service in a particular matter. Such awards are subject to the limitation on gifts imposed by the Political Reform Act and local law.

In addition, the following gifts are de minimis and therefore exempt from the restrictions on gifts imposed by section V of this Statement:

- i. Gifts, other than cash, with an aggregate value of \$25 or less per occasion; and
- ii. Gifts such as food and drink, without regard to value, to be shared in the office among officers or employees.

Example. A member of the public who regularly works with and receives assistance from the Department sends a \$15 basket of fruit to an employee as a holiday gift. Although the fruit may in fact be offered in exchange for performing services that the employee is expected to perform in the regular course of City duties, the employee may accept the fruit because the value is de minimis. (Because the reporting requirement is cumulative, an employee may be required to report even de minimis gifts on his or her Statement of Economic Interests if, over the course of a year, the gifts equal or exceed \$50.)

Example. A member of the public who regularly works with and receives assistance from the Department sends a \$150 basket of fruit to the Department as a holiday gift. Although the fruit may in fact be offered in exchange for performing services that the Department is expected to perform in the regular course of City duties, the Department may accept the fruit basket because it is a gift to the office to be shared among officers and employees.

VI. AMENDMENT OF STATEMENT

Once a Statement of Incompatible Activities is approved by the Ethics Commission, the Department may, subject to the approval of the Ethics Commission, amend the Statement. (C&GC Code § 3.218(b).) In addition, the Ethics Commission may at any time amend the Statement on its own initiative. No Statement of Incompatible Activities or any amendment thereto shall become operative until the City and County of San Francisco has satisfied the meet and confer requirements of State law and the collective bargaining agreement.

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