



NEWS

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CONTACT: MARY ANN MASKERY/
JIM SMART
MTA MEDIA RELATIONS
(213) 922-2736/922-2700
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MTA BOARD ADOPTS NEW ETHICS POLICY

The MTA Board of Directors voted today to adopt a new Code of Conduct for Board members, alternates, and their staff.

The new code revises the existing ethics policy to tighten prohibitions regarding procurement, gifts, and political contributions. It defines the role of the Board in relation to the agency, and spells out rules of behavior in Board affairs, and the proper relationship between Board members and MTA staff.

The new Code of Conduct restricts contact between Board members and MTA staff on the awarding of contracts, and outlines a series of rules to prohibit intervention by Board members in the procurement process. The same rules apply to alternates, staff, or consultants for Board members.

The Code also regulates political contributions to Board members exceeding \$250 from parties to a decision on a license, permit, or other entitlement, while that decision is pending, and until it is made public. Such prohibitions specifically apply to subcontractors as well as contractors.

Board members also are prohibited from accepting gifts aggregating \$289 or more from a single source in a calendar year, and cannot accept or solicit gifts from MTA contractors or potential contractors, or subcontractors.

More...

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"The purpose of this new ethics policy is not only to restrict and clarify the actions of Board members involving MTA policies and procurement, but also to eliminate even the appearance of impropriety," said MTA Chairman Larry Zarian. "It is important to communicate clearly to the public that our policy making process itself is open and beyond question."

The MTA Board currently operates under an existing ethics policy. The new Code reinforces provisions and clarifies procedures, making the code more restrictive.

The new Code also seeks to separate Board involvement in the day to day work of the MTA staff, or the hiring of staff, or the hiring of employees by contractors or subcontractors.

Furthermore, it spells out the need for courteous communication between Board members, and between Board members and MTA staff.

Separate policies regarding actions of lobbyists and contractors will be taken up later in the month.

The revised Code specifies a series of progressive sanctions for violations that may include public censure by the Board, disqualification from voting on a particular matter, suspension from the Board for a period of time, or a monetary fine.

"The new Code lays out comprehensive guidelines for Board members, and it assures the public that everyone on the Board is fully committed to maintaining the absolute integrity of government," Zarian said.

Inquiries for a final report of the policy should be directed to Ryan Nakagawa, MTA Ethics Officer, at One Gateway Plaza, Los Angeles, Ca., 90012.

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