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JOHN ST. CROIX
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Date: October 14, 2009
To: Members, Ethics Commission
From: John St. Croix, Executive Director
Re: Policy Priorities Discussion at the October 19, 2009 Meeting

At its August 2008 meeting, the Commission discussed policy priorities for the coming year. The language below, taken from the draft annual report, outlines the result of those discussions and may be useful as a framework for Monday's discussion.

For this particular year, the Commission determined that the following were areas of priority for the Commission to consider and improve.

1. Education and Technology
2. Campaign Finance Laws
3. Communications with the Public
4. Enforcement
5. Conflicts of Interest
6. Lobbyist and Campaign Consultant Ordinances.

Education and Technology – The Commission made significant technological advancements including: on-line training and education classes; a new web site that better connects with the community; digitizing Commission filings and making records accessible on-line; and enhancements to on-line filing including making additional forms available in electronic format.

Campaign Finance Laws – the Commission implemented complex changes to the public financing laws related to individual expenditure ceilings this fiscal year. In addition, it approved amendments to modify the calculation governing when a publicly financed candidate may access additional public funds. After the election, the Commission began taking steps to propose substantive amendments to the CFRO. The Commission also recommended and adopted regulations to implement the voter-approved Proposition H to provide guidance on when elected officials are barred from soliciting or receiving contributions from contractors.

Communications with the Public – the Commission set aside a portion of its November 2008 meeting to discuss this subject and some positive feedback was received from the Department of Human Resources and the general public on the quality of Commission communications. The Commission also scheduled a first-time joint meeting with the

Sunshine Ordinance Task Force in April of 2009 which appears will result in changes in the methods the two bodies use to relate to each other.

Enforcement – after the Commission completed work on its first ever Hearing on the Merits, Commission staff worked closely with Commissioner Harriman to draft new and improved regulations related to the conduct of enforcement duties, particularly those governing procedures in probable cause hearings and hearings on the merit. The series of recommendations in these areas is currently pending before the Commission.

Conflicts of Interest – As noted earlier, the Commission completed its several-year review of Statements of Incompatible Activities, with the final SIAs for all departments, boards and commissions approved on September 8, 2008. On October 8, all the SIAs went into effect; Commission staff then worked with several departments to develop and present trainings on ethics and the SIAs. Such trainings remain ongoing. Earlier in the fiscal year, the Commission proposed and approved regulations that address various aspects of the SIAs relating to the advance written determination, handling of complaints of alleged violations of the SIAs and penalties for violations.