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PRESS RELEASE

State Ethics Commission announces agreement with three members of the County Livestock Loss Association

Albuquerque, NM, December 11, 2024 – The State Ethics Commission, an independent state agency that promotes the integrity of state and local government, reached agreements with three members of the County Livestock Loss Association (CLLA), Tom Paterson, Nelson Shirley, and Audrey McQueen, related to their conduct as CLLA members.

The CLLA is a local political subdivision, created by a joint powers agreement among Catron County, Sierra County, and Socorro County. The CLLA pays public funds to cattle growers for losses incurred due to the presence of Mexican grey wolves. The CLLA uses specific formulae and schedules to pay cattle growers for three kinds of losses: depredations, indirect losses, and wolf presence.

On October 4, 2024, the Commission authorized its attorney staff to commence a civil action under the Governmental Conduct Act to prevent those CLLA members who have applied or could apply for CLLA payments from voting on the formulae and methods by which they themselves (or their ranches) would stand to benefit. In lieu of litigation, the Commission and Mr. Paterson, Mr. Shirley, and Ms. McQueen reached respective agreements that included the following terms and understandings:

- Mr. Paterson will abstain from any vote to provide compensation to himself or Spur Ranch Cattle Co. LLC for any deprecation payments, conflict avoidance payments, or indirect damage payments.
- Mr. Shirley will abstain from any vote to provide compensation to himself or Spur Lake Cattle Company for any deprecation payments, conflict avoidance payments, or indirect damage payments.
- Ms. McQueen will abstain from any vote to provide compensation to herself or Rainy Mesa Ranch for any deprecation payments, conflict avoidance payments, or indirect damage payments.
- Mr. Paterson, Mr. Shirley, and Ms. McQueen each anticipate that the methods of compensation by which the CLLA makes to ranchers would not be automatically applied to their own applications; rather, if Mr. Paterson, Mr. Shirley, and Ms. McQueen (or their businesses) submit an application for payment to the CLLA, that application would be determined independently by the remaining four members of the CLLA board.
- The agreements do not preclude Mr. Paterson, Mr. Shirley, or Ms. McQueen from participating in any other CLLA action or in making and presenting evidence supporting a claim for deprecation payments, conflict avoidance payments, or indirect damage payments to the remainder of the CLLA board.
- The agreements do not permit Mr. Paterson, Mr. Shirley, or Ms. McQueen to participate in or vote on any proceeding or action in which his or her recusal would otherwise be required by law.

Read the full agreements here: (1) [Agreement between the State Ethics Commission and Mr. Paterson](#); (2) [Agreement between the State Ethics Commission and Mr. Shirley](#); (3) [Agreement between the State Ethics Commission and Ms. McQueen](#).

About the State Ethics Commission

The State Ethics Commission is an independent, constitutional state agency with the authority to enforce civil violations of New Mexico's governmental ethics and disclosure statutes, including the Governmental Conduct Act. The Commission is

comprised of three Democratic Commissioners, three Republican Commissioners, and one independent Commissioner who is registered as “decline to state.”

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For more information about the State Ethics Commission, visit www.sec.nm.gov.