

# LOUISIANA SENATE



## ALAN SEABAUGH State Senator ~ District 31

March 5, 2024

Honorable Elizabeth Murrill  
Louisiana Attorney General  
P.O. Box 94005  
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

Re: Opinion

Dear Attorney General Murrill:

It has come to my attention that the following is occurring within the office of the Public Service Commission:

- A. A full-time, paid aide has been hired by and with salary and benefits paid by an outside group promoting a particular policy agenda and placed in the office of the Louisiana Public Service Commission (hereafter "LA PSC"), as part of an arrangement which required the LA PSC to represent that this was consistent with all applicable legal and ethics requirements. See Exhibit 1 (Bloomberg Moves Beyond Attorneys General...), and Exhibit 2 (Appendix A).
- B. Professional(s) are being provided to the LA PSC by another outside group advocating a particular policy agenda which professionals, records show, serve as senior advisor(s) to the Public Service Commissioner on matters before the LA PSC. See Exhibit 1 and Exhibit 3 (Appendix B).
- C. At least one other outside group has offered donor-financed but purportedly also "pro bono" consulting which the group values at \$50,000.00 to an LA PSC Office "to orchestrate Louisiana's transition" to "renewable energy." See Exhibit 1 and Exhibit 3 (Appendix B).

This raises several questions to which the public deserve attention including if not limited to:

Do the Louisiana code of governmental ethics, and/or the relevant governing statutes and any other authorities address the scenarios in A., B., and/or C. above?

OFFICES IN MANY, SHREVEPORT, AND NATCHITOCHES

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What provisions of law are relevant here? How so, i.e., do they speak to the arrangements stated above in A., B., and C., above, are they silent on such arrangements, or are they ambiguous?

Are the arrangements stated above in A., B., and C. statutorily permissible?

Are the arrangements stated above in A., B., and C. ethically permissible?

Does a Louisiana Public Service Commissioner and/or his office have the authority consistent with applicable law to accept an aide (or legal fellow) whose salary and benefits are provided by an outside funding source? If so, what authorizes this?

Are the aides and/or fellows "public employees" within the meaning of the Louisiana Code of Government Ethics?

Is the offer of a free or donor-financed "aide" or "fellow" a "thing of economic value" as defined in the Louisiana Code of Government Ethics?

What record, if any, exists of the LA PSC assessing and confirming that the arrangements stated above in A., B., and C. are statutorily and ethically permissible?

If these arrangements are not permissible and/or if there is no record of assessing and confirming their propriety, and/or obtaining any necessary approvals before accepting the gifts, what are the violations, consequences, and processes of redress?

Your time and cooperation in this matter are greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,



Alan Seabaugh  
Louisiana State Senate  
District 31