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PRESS RELEASE

State Ethics Commission settles revolving-door lawsuit with Gabriel Vargas and Double Eagle Real Estate.

Albuquerque, NM, December 7, 2022 – Today, the State Ethics Commission announces it has settled a lawsuit filed against Mr. Gabriel Vargas, a former commercial appraiser at the Sandoval County Assessor’s Office, and Double Eagle Real Estate, doing business as Double Eagle Property Tax Consultants (“Double Eagle”). On October 21, 2022, the Commission filed a civil action against Mr. Vargas and Double Eagle to enforce the revolving-door provisions of the Governmental Conduct Act. The Commission alleged that Mr. Vargas and Double Eagle violated those provisions, particularly considering their representation of Presbyterian Healthcare Services on Presbyterian’s protest of the 2020 valuation of Rust Medical Center. The Commission sought civil fines, injunctive relief, and an order requiring Double Eagle to disgorge the fee that Presbyterian Healthcare Services paid Double Eagle for the property tax protest of the 2020 valuation of Rust Medical Center.

To settle this matter, and without admitting any liability or wrongdoing, Mr. Vargas and Double Eagle paid the State of New Mexico \$13,000. This amount exceeds the maximum \$5,000 civil fine currently available under the Governmental Conduct Act and is approximately equal to the fee that Double Eagle received from Presbyterian Healthcare Services for Double Eagle's representation of the 2020 valuation of Rust Medical Center. On May 2, 2022, the district court had dismissed the claims against Double Eagle Real Estate.

Read the Commission's complaint in *State Ethics Commission v. Vargas, et al.*, D-202-CV-2021-06201 (2d Jud. Dist. Ct.) [here](#).

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