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PRESS RELEASE

State Ethics Commission files civil enforcement action against Christopher Stagg for violating the Governmental Conduct Act

Albuquerque, NM, October 10, 2023 – The State Ethics Commission has filed a civil lawsuit against Village of Taos Ski Valley Councilman Jay Christopher Stagg to enforce the Governmental Conduct Act. The Commission’s lawsuit alleges that Stagg violated a requirement that he recuse himself from engaging in official acts that directly affect his financial interests.

According to the complaint’s factual allegations, Mr. Stagg—who was at all relevant times both a member of the Village of Taos Ski Valley’s Planning and Zoning Commission and the Vice President of Taos Ski Valley, Inc (“TSVI”)—refused to disqualify himself from participating in Planning and Zoning decisions related to TSVI’s applications for a conditional use permit for the construction of a new hotel and a land transaction between the Village and TSVI for the construction of a gondola. As a member of the Planning and Zoning Commission, Mr. Stagg considered and voted on these items, despite also being the Vice President of TSVI.

The Governmental Conduct Act requires that public officers treat their government positions as a public trust. Many public officers in New Mexico are also officers of private businesses and, thus, have fiduciary duties to those businesses. When those businesses seek official government action from those public officers, the

public officers have conflicting loyalties—to the public and to their employer. In such circumstances, the Governmental Conduct Act requires that the public officer be disqualified and recuse from the matter. As a member of the Village of Taos Planning and Zoning Commission, Mr. Stagg repeatedly refused to do so.

The State Ethics Commission has filed suit to vindicate the statute's purpose to deter conflicts of interest in the Village of Taos Ski Valley and around New Mexico.

[Click here to read the State Ethics Commission's complaint.](#)

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