

Contra Costa Resource Conservation District Ethics Policy

Accepted by CCRCD Board on 4-20-2010

Creating an Ethical Culture and Positive Workplace Environment

It is the intent of the District to provide the administrative and financial support for an ethical culture and positive workplace environment. In order to accomplish this:

- Directors and Management will set the tone for ethical behavior and lead by example.
- The District will provide ethics training to all employees on an annual basis
- Employees will have guidelines for Standards of Conduct (included in Contra Costa Resource Conservation District Personnel Manual – 2008).
- Employees will know the definition and examples of unethical behavior.
- Employees will know how to report fraud and unethical behavior.
- Employees will be subject to reasonable performance goals.
- Below market compensation will be avoided.

Compliance with all Laws, Rules and Regulations

- All Directors and employees will comply with all laws, rules and regulation prescribed by a government in law, code, policy and procedure manuals, contracts and grant agreements.
- The District will not enter into any contract that creates a risk that all laws, rules and regulations cannot be followed.
- The District will terminate any grant agreements or vendor contracts in which the grantor or vendor requests or instructs the District to perform an illegal or unethical act.
- All Directors will complete the Ethics Training required by AB 1234.

Conflict of Interest

The following policy ensures that any conflicts of interest or the appearance thereof are avoided or appropriately managed through disclosure, recluse or other means.

No Current Board member or employee may:

- Engage or participate in a business or transaction, including outside employment, or have a direct or indirect interest that is incompatible with, or that would tend to impair their independent judgment in the proper discharge of their District responsibilities;
- Solicit or accept a gift from anyone who has an interest in any project within the Board member's or employee's responsibility;
- Use information about District's affairs for his/her own or others' financial interests (interests with a monetary value of \$ 100 or more);
- Ask or permit NRCS or District-owned vehicles, equipment, facilities, materials, or property to be used for his/her own personal convenience or profit, except when this property is permitted for the employee's or Board member's use when conducting District business;
- Contract with the District for contracts larger than \$3500, unless the contract is awarded through a public notice, competitive bidding process, or noted in writing why a competitive bidding process was not used;
- Use his/her position for personal financial benefit or that of an immediate family member (spouse, child, or dependent relative living in his household) or associated business (business owned by a Board member, employee, or member of one's immediate family or where any one of them works or serves as officer, director, or compensated agent);
- Accept a fee or honorarium for an article written, appearance or speech made, or participation at an event, in one's official District capacity;
- For paid positions, engage in any political activity while on duty or during any time one is paid to be on duty for the District that violates the conditions of any grant contract in effect with the District;
- Use District funds, supplies, vehicles, or facilities for political activity; or
- Solicit or accept anything of value, including a gift, loan, political contribution, reward or promise of future employment based on any understanding that the Board member's or employee's official action or judgment would be or had been influenced by it. A "gift" is generally anything of value given for less than its value. The exceptions include items valued at \$10 or less; certificates or ceremonial awards valued at less than \$100; and gifts given at gift-giving occasions, such as Christmas and Hanukkah. In addition, a gift is not

received by a Board member or employee who refuses it, returns it, pays the donor the full value of it, accepts it on behalf of the District (i. e. , the gift is intended to remain in the permanent possession of the District), or donates it to a nonprofit organization. If donated, the Board member or employee may not take a tax deduction or credit for it.

- This policy also prohibits a Board member or employee from voting on, or otherwise participating in, any matter on behalf of the District if he/she has an associated business, or an immediate family member has a financial or personal interest in the matter greater than that of any other segment of the population, including the sale of real estate, material, supplies, or services to the municipality or District. If the participation is within the scope of the Board member's or employee's official responsibility, he/she must give the Board a written explanation of the nature and extent of one's interest. This policy prohibits immediate families and associated businesses from entering into private contractual agreements with the District.

The policy prohibits Former Board members or employees from:

- Accepting compensation from the District to appear before the District Board of Directors for the first year after terminating employment or office;
- Representing anyone, other than the District, in any matter in which they participated personally and substantially while in District service;
- Disclosing or using confidential information gained in their position at the District for their own financial gain or that of others; or
- Working for a party under contract, other than the District, for one year after the contract is signed, if they participated substantially in the contract negotiations or award and the contract obligates the District to pay \$30,000 or more.

Conflict of Interest Forms

- As elected officials the District directors must avoid conflicts of interest. Directors have a responsibility to disclose actual or potential conflicts before their appointment. The Directors must complete a Conflict of Interest Form 700 annually as well as when assuming office.

Ethical Standards in Bidding, Negotiation and Performance of Awards

It is the intention of the District to maintain the highest level in ethics in the bidding, negotiation and performance of awards. At no time shall the District:

- Award or commit to any contracts with vendors or subcontractors prior to an award without all CCRCDC competitive bidding procedures and guidelines being followed.
- Accept a grant where the act of a grantor specifying a particular vendor or subcontractor in the award would violate the contract awarding policies of the District.
- Consider bids from vendors or contractors who were material participants in the proposal preparation.
- Consider bids from vendors and contractors who participated in strategic planning sessions (other than providing information) of Technical Advisory Committees.

Reporting of Ethics Violations, Fraud or Embezzlement

Refer to Contra Costa Resource Conservation District Whistleblower Policy