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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

OHIO ETHICS COMMISSION ISSUES OPINION FOR GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

At its meeting on March 9, 2023, the Ohio Ethics Commission approved a [Formal Advisory Opinion](#) covering donations from private entities to government agencies. “Public agencies may accept gifts or payments from vendors provided that no agency officials or employees receive any personal benefit from the donation,” stated Executive Director Paul M. Nick.

The Commission’s statutory guidance requires that a donation made as a gift must be given without the expectation of something in return. A donation made as a payment is part of a contractual exchange with a public agency. Such payments provide something beneficial to the community, such as a park, in return for the agency awarding the contract.

Chairman Merom Brachman noted, “This Commission Opinion gives guidance in response to requests by local authorities working with the increasing number of industries seeking to locate around the State.” The opinion explains when the Ethics Law prohibits a donation to a public agency and clarifies how public agencies should determine whether a donation is a gift or a payment.

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