

# THE TEXAS GROUNDWATER PROTECTION COMMITTEE'S ETHICS POLICY

## I. OVERVIEW

Pursuant to Section 572.051(c) of the Texas Government Code, the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee promulgates the following ethics policy.

This ethics policy prescribes standards of conduct for all representatives of member organizations on the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee and all staff employees of member organizations who provide support for the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee.

This ethics policy does not supersede any applicable federal or Texas law or administrative rule. Representatives of member organizations on the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee and all staff employees of member organizations who provide support for the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee remain subject to the ethics policy of their respective member organizations.

All representatives of member organizations on the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee and all staff employees of member organizations who provide support for the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee must familiarize themselves with this ethics policy.

All representatives of member organizations on the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee and all staff employees of member organizations who provide support for the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee must abide by all applicable federal and Texas laws, administrative rules, and Texas Groundwater Protection Committee conduct policies, including this ethics policy. A representative of member organizations on the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee and a staff employee of member organizations who provides support for the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee who violates any provision of the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee ethics policies may be subject to an employment-related sanction based upon the ethics policy of the respective member organization and a replacement representative to the TGPC from the member organization would be requested. A representative of member organizations on the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee and a staff employee of member organizations who provides support for the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee who violates any applicable federal or Texas law or rule may be subject to civil or criminal penalties in addition to any employment-related sanction.

## II. STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

A. A representative of member organizations on the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee and a staff employee of member organizations who provides support for the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee shall not:

(1) accept or solicit any gift, favor, or service that might reasonably tend to influence the representative or employee in the discharge of official duties, or that the representative or employee knows or should know is being offered with the intent to influence the representative or employee's official conduct;

(2) intentionally or knowingly solicit, accept, or agree to accept any benefit for having exercised his or her official powers or performed his or her official duties in favor of another;

(3) disclose confidential information, information that is excepted from public disclosure under the Texas Public Information Act (Tex. Gov't Code Ann. ch. 552), or information that has been ordered sealed by a court, that was acquired by reason of the employee's official position, or accept other employment, including self-employment, or engage in a business, charity, nonprofit organization, or professional activity that the representative or employee might reasonably expect would require or induce the representative or employee to disclose confidential information, information that is excepted from public disclosure under the Texas Public Information Act, or information that has been ordered sealed by a court, that was acquired by reason of the employee's official position;

(4) accept other employment, including self-employment, or compensation or engage in a business, charity, nonprofit organization, or professional activity that could reasonably be expected to impair the representative or employee's independence of judgment in the performance of the representative or employee's official duties;

(5) make personal investments, or have a personal or financial interest, that could reasonably be expected to create a substantial conflict between the representative or employee's private interest and the public interest;

(6) utilize state time, property, facilities, or equipment for any purpose other than official state business, unless such use is reasonable and incidental and does not result in any direct cost to the state or Texas Groundwater Protection Committee, interfere with the representative or employee's official duties, and interfere with Texas Groundwater Protection Committee functions;

(7) utilize his or her official position, or state issued items, such as a badge, indicating such position for financial gain, obtaining privileges, or avoiding consequences of illegal acts;

(8) knowingly make misleading statements, either oral or written, or provide false information, in the course of official state business; or

(9) engage in any political activity while on state time or utilize state resources for any political activity.

B. A representative of member organizations on the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee and a staff employee of member organizations who provides support for the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee shall:

- (1) perform his or her official duties in a lawful, professional, and ethical manner befitting the state and Texas Groundwater Protection Committee; and
- (2) report any conduct or activity that the employee believes to be in violation of this ethics policy to the attorney liaison of the Office of Legal Services to the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee.