

1 STACEY FULHORST, Executive Director  
City of San Diego Ethics Commission  
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3 Telephone: (619) 533-3476  
4 Facsimile: (619) 533-3448

5 Petitioner

6  
7 **BEFORE THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO**  
8 **ETHICS COMMISSION**

9  
10 In re the Matter of: ) Case No.: 2009-54  
11 )  
COAST LAW GROUP LLP, ) **STIPULATION, DECISION AND**  
12 ) **ORDER**  
Respondent. )  
13 )

14 **STIPULATION**

15 **THE PARTIES STIPULATE AS FOLLOWS:**

16 1. Petitioner Stacey Fulhorst is the Executive Director of the City of San Diego  
17 Ethics Commission [Ethics Commission]. The Ethics Commission is charged with a duty to  
18 administer, implement, and enforce local governmental ethics laws contained in the San Diego  
19 Municipal Code [SDMC] relating to, among other things, the provisions of the City's Municipal  
20 Lobbying Ordinance.

21 2. At all times mentioned herein, Respondent Coast Law Group LLP [Respondent]  
22 was a lobbying firm registered with the Office of the City Clerk. Marco A. Gonzalez, the firm's  
23 managing partner, has been registered as a lobbyist since 2006.

24 3. This Stipulation, Decision and Order [Stipulation] will be submitted for  
25 consideration by the Ethics Commission at its next scheduled meeting, and the agreements  
26 contained herein are contingent upon the approval of the Stipulation and the accompanying  
27 Decision and Order by the Ethics Commission.

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1           4.    This Stipulation resolves all factual and legal issues raised in this matter by the  
2 Ethics Commission without the necessity of holding an administrative hearing to determine the  
3 Respondent’s liability.

4           5.    Respondent understands and knowingly and voluntarily waives any and all  
5 procedural rights under the SDMC, including, but not limited to, a determination of probable  
6 cause, the issuance and receipt of an administrative complaint, the right to appear personally in  
7 any administrative hearing held in this matter, the right to confront and cross-examine witnesses  
8 testifying at the hearing, the right to subpoena witnesses to testify at the hearing, and the right to  
9 have the Ethics Commission or a volunteer hearing officer hear this matter. Respondent agrees  
10 to hold the City of San Diego harmless from any and all claims or damages resulting from the  
11 Commission’s investigation or this stipulated agreement, or any matter reasonably related  
12 thereto. Respondent further agrees that the terms of this Stipulation constitute compliance with  
13 the provisions of SDMC section 26.0450 in that the Stipulation includes a recitation of facts, a  
14 reference to each violation, and an order.

15           6.    The Respondent acknowledges that this Stipulation is not binding upon any other  
16 law enforcement or government agency and does not preclude the Ethics Commission from  
17 cooperating with or assisting any other law enforcement or government agency with regard to  
18 this or any other related matter.

19           7.    The parties agree that in the event the Ethics Commission refuses to accept this  
20 Stipulation, it shall become null and void. Respondent further agrees that in the event the Ethics  
21 Commission rejects the Stipulation and a full evidentiary hearing before the City Ethics  
22 Commission becomes necessary, no member of the Ethics Commission or its staff shall be  
23 disqualified because of prior consideration of this Stipulation.

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1 **Summary of Law and Facts**

2 8. The Lobbying Ordinance requires registered lobbying firms to file quarterly  
3 disclosure reports no later than the last day of the months of April, July, October, and January,  
4 covering the preceding calendar quarter. SDMC §§ 27.4015, 27.4016.

5 9. Respondent registered as a lobbying firm with the Office of the City Clerk on  
6 January 7, 2009.

7 10. Respondent failed to file a disclosure report for the first quarter of 2009 until July  
8 24, 2009, almost three months after the due date of April 30, 2009. The report ultimately filed  
9 by Respondent disclosed that during the first quarter of 2009, Respondent lobbied five City  
10 Officials on behalf of two clients concerning various municipal decisions.

11 **Count**

12 **Count 1 – Violation of SDMC sections 27.4015 and 27.4016**

13 11. Respondent failed to timely file its quarterly disclosure report for the first quarter  
14 of 2009 as required by SDMC sections 27.4015 and 27.4016. Respondent's quarterly disclosure  
15 report was due on April 30, 2009, but Respondent did not file it until July 24, 2009.

16 **Factors in Aggravation**

17 12. Respondent is an experienced lobbying firm in the City of San Diego. Thus, there  
18 is a reasonable expectation that Respondent was aware of the quarterly filing requirements in the  
19 Lobbying Ordinance. Moreover, the City Clerk staff sent letters to Respondent reminding the  
20 firm that its first quarter report was due by April 30, 2009.

21 **Factors in Mitigation**

22 13. Respondent fully cooperated with the Ethics Commission's investigation.

23 **Conclusion**

24 14. Respondent agrees to take necessary and prudent precautions to comply with all  
25 provisions of the City's Municipal Lobbying Ordinance in the future.

26 16. Respondent agrees to pay a fine in the amount of \$500. This amount must be paid  
27 no later than October 1, 2009, by check or money order made payable to the City Treasurer. The

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1 submitted payment will be held pending Commission approval of this Stipulation and execution  
2 of the Decision and Order portion set forth below.

3  
4 DATED: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
STACEY FULHORST, Petitioner  
City of San Diego Ethics Commission

5  
6 DATED: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
COAST LAW GROUP, LLP, Respondent  
By: Marco Gonzalez, Managing Partner

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9 **DECISION AND ORDER**

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11 The Ethics Commission has considered the above Stipulation at its meeting on  
12 \_\_\_\_\_, 2009. The Ethics Commission hereby approves the Stipulation and orders that,  
13 in accordance with the Stipulation, Respondent pays a fine in the amount of \$500.

14  
15 DATED: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Richard Valdez, Chair  
SAN DIEGO ETHICS COMMISSION