

MOTION

RULES, ELECTIONS, INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

To earn and maintain the trust of the public, it is crucial for elected officials to abide by rigorous ethics standards and avoid conflicts of interest, yet there have been a number of violations in recent years. Los Angeles City Councilmembers are beholden to ethics rules and laws such as those imposed by the City Charter and state and federal laws. However, the number and complexity of these standards have grown in recent years, making compliance more difficult.

While the City Attorney's Office provides legal advice on conflicts of interest and other issues and the Ethics Commission provides advice on ethical and other issues, Councilmembers need additional assistance identifying agenda items that might raise conflict of interest questions.

Recognizing that state laws surrounding conflicts of interest are often highly complex, the South Coast Air Quality Management District and Metro have staff that affirmatively review agendas for conflicts and offer elected officials specialized guidance to avoid them. These agencies can serve as a model for the City of Los Angeles, where elected officials are currently left to identify and report their own conflicts of interest without the assistance of a regular agenda screening process.

Establishing an Office of Compliance with adequate staff and resources to review City Council and City Council Committee agendas to identify potential conflicts of interest for Councilmembers in advance of any votes being taken would help ensure greater public trust.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council instruct the City Attorney, in consultation with the Executive Director of the Ethics Commission, the City Administrative Officer, and the Chief Legislative Analyst to provide a detailed report within 90 days with recommendations for establishing a permanent Office of Compliance that would proactively assist Councilmembers with identifying and avoiding potential conflicts of interest by reviewing financial disclosure and other forms of Councilmembers and upcoming City Council and City Council Committee agendas to identify potential conflicts. The report should include, but not be limited to:

1. A complete description of the responsibilities of the Office of Compliance and a system for conducting proactive reviews, drawing on the experience of any major cities or other government agencies with successful centralized compliance offices or units;
2. The costs, potential funding sources, personnel, structure, and facilities needs of a permanent Office of Compliance, including whether the Office of Compliance should be established as an independent body or within an existing City department, an analysis of where personnel for the Office of Compliance could be sourced (within and outside

PK

GCT 0 4 2023

current City staff) and benchmark comparisons with staffing and resources at other large municipalities' and agencies' central compliance offices or units; and

3. Any changes to the City's ordinances and/or the City Charter that would be necessary to establish the Office of Compliance as the unit responsible for assisting Councilmembers with identifying and reporting conflicts of interest and abiding by ethics laws.

PRESENTED BY: 
Katy Yaroslavsky
Councilwoman, 5th District


Nithya Raman
Councilwoman, 4th District

SECONDED BY: 



ORIGINAL