CALIFORNIA GAMBLING CONTROL COMMISSION

Contacting the Commission: A Helpful Guide

The California Gambling Control Commission (Commission) is sending out this guidance to our stakeholders on the best practices for contacting the Commission. This guidance identifies the appropriate contacts at the Commission, and has information on how to avoid violating ex parte communication rules when interacting with the Commission and the Bureau of Gambling Control (Bureau).

Who Do I Contact?

For general matters involving **licensing or other requests for approval**, please contact Brian Gilleland, Deputy Director, Licensing Division at bgilleland@cgcc.ca.gov, or licensinginfo@cgcc.ca.gov.

For matters involving **regulations or legislation**, please contact Nicole Learned, Deputy Director, Legislative and Regulatory Affairs Division at nlearned@cgcc.ca.gov, or lawsandregs@cgcc.ca.gov.

For **Gambling Control Act (GCA) evidentiary hearing** matters, please contact the Presiding Officer identified in your hearing notice; or the Administrative Hearings Coordinator, at hearings@cgcc.ca.gov; or Jason Pope, Chief Counsel, at jpope@cgcc.ca.gov.

For all other matters, please contact Lisa Wardall, Executive Director, at lwardall@cgcc.ca.gov or at comments@cgcc.ca.gov.

What Is Ex Parte Communication?

Ex parte communication means a communication regarding the merits of an application or request without giving the proper notice and opportunity for all involved parties to participate in the communication.

To comply with ex parte communication rules for matters involving licensing applications or requests for approval that are pending before the Bureau or the Commission, include all appropriate parties (Commission staff, Bureau staff, and the Applicant (or their Designated Agent)) on the correspondence. Failure to include all appropriate parties is considered an ex parte communication violation.

Stakeholders must never send communications of any kind directly to Commissioners regarding applications, requests for approval, or any other matters that may be pending a decision before the Commission or the Bureau.

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Why Does It Matter?

Transparency is one of the core tenets of good governance and is one of the values of the Commission's current Strategic Plan. Ex parte rules guarantee that all matters taken up by the Commission are conducted in a fair and transparent manner.

One of the dangers ex parte communication poses to transparency is that it can lead to the Commissioners making decisions based on incomplete information. If someone communicates to one Commissioner about a matter before the Commission, that information may not reach Commission staff, the Bureau, the other Commissioners, or other relevant parties. All involved parties must have the complete record of information, and it is on that completed record that the Commissioners must make their decisions.

What Are The Consequences Of An Ex Parte Violation?

The Commissioners may deny an application or other approval solely based upon a prohibited ex parte communication.

Ex parte communications may also violate the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act and even allow other parties to overturn a decision taken in your favor. The Department of Justice publishes a guide to the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act, which you can view here.

The Commission values constructive and respectful stakeholder engagement, and it is vital that all parties conduct that engagement in a manner that reflects good governance and the Commission's values.

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