



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
PRESS RELEASE

Ethics Commission

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, July 10, 2014

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**ETHICS COMMISSION LEVIES ADDITIONAL FINES
TOTALING \$60,000 IN MONEY LAUNDERING CASES**

Stacey Fulhorst, Executive Director of the City of San Diego Ethics Commission, announced today the Commission's approval of eight stipulated settlement agreements involving individuals associated with Marc Chase, the owner of Symbolic Motor Car Company, who previously paid an \$80,000 fine for laundering campaign funds from Jose Susumo Azano Matsura to various committees supporting mayoral candidates in the 2012 election cycle. According to Ms. Fulhorst, these individuals agreed to participate in the money laundering scheme by accepting cash from Chase to serve as the "straw donors" and write contribution checks in their own names, thereby concealing the true source of the funds.

In each of the eight cases, the Commission levied the maximum penalty of \$5,000 per violation. Four of the eight individuals paid a \$10,000 fine because they also arranged for their spouses to serve as straw donors and make contributions using cash received from Chase.

The City's campaign laws prohibit money laundering because it circumvents the City's contribution limits – which are intended to prevent the appearance of corruption and undue influence over officeholders – and deprives the public of information regarding the financial supporters of City candidates. "The maximum penalties were warranted in light of the severity of the violations," said John O'Neill, the Commission Chair. "These cases should send a clear

message that the Commission will aggressively pursue individuals who agree to serve as conduits for illegal campaign contributions.”

Ethics Commission fines are paid to the City of San Diego’s General Fund. The stipulated settlements approved by the Commission resolve all factual and legal issues without the necessity of holding one or more administrative hearings. Stipulations can be viewed on the Commission’s website at <http://www.sandiego.gov/ethics/documents/stipulations.shtml>.

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