



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
PRESS RELEASE

Ethics Commission

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**ETHICS COMMISSION ANNOUNCES SETTLEMENT
WITH LOBBYIST ART CASTANARES
CONCERNING VIOLATIONS OF LOBBYING LAWS**

Stacey Fulhorst, Executive Director of the City of San Diego Ethics Commission, announced today the Commission's approval of a stipulated settlement agreement with Art Castanares. Mr. Castanares, a registered lobbyist, has agreed to pay a fine of \$4,500 for failing to timely register as a lobbyist in 2007, and failing to timely file five quarterly disclosure reports.

Ms. Fulhorst explained that Mr. Castanares did not renew his registration for 2007 until June 27, 2007, more than five months late. In addition, he failed to timely file his quarterly disclosure reports for the second, third, and fourth quarters of 2006, and the first and second quarters of 2007 (the days past due ranged from 23 to 147). Ms. Fulhorst commented that, "The timely disclosure of compensated efforts to influence municipal decisions is the foundation of the City's Lobbying Ordinance." She added that, in this case, Mr. Castanares's late filing of disclosure reports deprived the public of timely information regarding his efforts on behalf of his clients to influence important municipal decisions, including the "big box" ordinance, the operations of the Sports Arena, a City towing contract, the La Jolla Commons project, and various real estate development matters.

Ms. Fulhorst also noted that Mr. Castanares has been a registered lobbyist for four years and should therefore be aware of the filing deadlines for registration and quarterly disclosure

reports. Moreover, she noted that the City Clerk's Office sent Mr. Castanares numerous reminder notices, both before and after the various filing deadlines.

The Commission Chairman, Gil Cabrera, characterized the failure to timely file lobbyist registration forms and quarterly disclosure reports as "serious violations." He added, "The public has a right to know who is lobbying City Officials on behalf of private interests in exchange for compensation. Lobbyist registration forms and disclosure reports are a vital and necessary source of this information."

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 an administrative hearing.

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