

# TEXAS ETHICS COMMISSION

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**TO: Registered Lobbyists**

**DATE: June 10, 2016**

## TEXAS ETHICS COMMISSION RULE ON FACT-FINDING TRIPS

This letter is to inform you of a rule recently adopted by the Texas Ethics Commission ("Commission") regarding fact-finding trips under the state lobby law (Chapter 305 of the Government Code).

**Restrictions on Transportation and Lodging:** The lobby law prohibits a lobbyist from providing transportation or lodging to a member of the legislative or executive branch unless the transportation or lodging is covered by one of the statutory exceptions. One of the exceptions is for transportation and lodging provided to a member to explore matters directly related to the member's duties, such as a "fact-finding trip."

**Fact-Finding Trip Rule:** On June 1, 2016, the Commission adopted rule §34.14 to clarify when a lobby expenditure for transportation or lodging qualifies as an expenditure for a "fact-finding trip."

Under the rule, an expenditure for transportation or lodging provided to a member of the legislative or executive branch is considered to be for a "fact-finding trip" only if:

1. The expenditure is necessary for the member to obtain information that directly relates to the member's official duties,
2. The member cannot reasonably obtain the information without the expenditure, and
3. The expenditure is not for the member's attendance at a merely ceremonial event or pleasure trip.

Additionally, if detailed reporting is required for the expenditure in a lobby activities report, the purpose of the expenditure must include a description of the information that the expenditure was necessary to obtain. The rule is also available at [https://www.ethics.state.tx.us/rules/adopted\\_Jun\\_2016.html#Fact](https://www.ethics.state.tx.us/rules/adopted_Jun_2016.html#Fact).

**Effective Date:** The rule is effective on June 22, 2016.

**For Details:** For additional information about lobbying in Texas, see the Commission's lobby law guide available at [https://www.ethics.state.tx.us/guides/lobby\\_guide.pdf](https://www.ethics.state.tx.us/guides/lobby_guide.pdf).