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No conflict for County official recommending work in his neighborhood

The Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics and Public Trust (COE) today found No Probable Cause to three complaints (**C 18-01, C 18-05 & C 18-07**) filed against a high-ranking official of the Miami-Dade Department of Transportation and Public Works by residents opposed to the construction of a bridge uniting Southwest 87th Avenue in Palmetto Bay. They alleged that Department Deputy Director Frank Guyameir's recommendation for approval of the bridge was biased because he lives close to the proposed project. The COE staff has adopted a standard similar to that of the Florida Commission on Ethics in determining whether an individual has a conflict and considers the size of the class of people affected by the action. Since Guyameir owns one of hundreds of other homes within the affected area, the COE determined that he would not receive any special benefit from construction of the bridge. Additionally, the complaints may be moot since the Transportation Planning Organization has voted against constructing the project.

The Ethics Commission clarified questions regarding a possible family-related conflict in its approval of the COE staff response to **RQO 18-02**. The question came from Alisa Caballero, a Quality and Assurance Officer in the Administrative Services Division of Miami-Dade's Public Housing and Community Development Department, which is overseeing the Liberty Square Rising housing redevelopment project. Among Caballero's duties is oversight of Federal Section 3 reporting and the certification of companies involved in federally-supported housing to ensure they provide economic opportunities to low income residents. Ms. Caballero's husband is seeking to bid on plumbing work with a prime subcontractor and his company, Caballero Plumbing, Inc., is seeking Section 3 certification. The Opinion confirmed that the Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics Ordinance does not prohibit immediate family members of County employees from subcontracting with County vendors. However, it would prohibit Ms. Caballero or a person under her supervision from being involved in any action affecting her husband's business. The opinion instructs the department to assign another employee who is not under Ms. Caballero's supervision to oversee the certification process.

The Ethics Commission was created in 1996 as an independent agency with advisory and quasi-judicial powers. It is composed of five members, serving staggered terms of four years each. Through a program of education, outreach and enforcement, the Commission seeks to empower the community and bolster public trust.

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