

**Meyers, Robert (COE)**

7ND 09-23

**From:** Meyers, Robert (COE)  
**Sent:** Monday, February 02, 2009 2:52 PM  
**To:** Nares, Dimitrios (ITC)  
**Subject:** RE: Commission on Ethics Opinion

Jimmy:

It would not be appropriate for your office to make inquiries on behalf of a Board member in matters dealing with his private business interests. If it is public information that Sierra Leon is in need of water treatment and desalinization equipment, the Board member should directly contact members of the delegation without using the ITC. If your office is simply being asked to give the Board member a phone number or e-mail address, that's fine. Additionally, the Board member should refrain from mentioning his position with the ITC Board when contacting these officials from Sierra Leon, as this could amount to exploitation of official position.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me at your convenience.

Thanks,

Robert Meyers, Executive Director  
 Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics and Public Trust

**From:** Nares, Dimitrios (ITC)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 28, 2009 4:52 PM  
**To:** Meyers, Robert (COE)  
**Cc:** Ojeda, Tony (ITC)  
**Subject:** RE: Commission on Ethics Opinion

Hello Mr. Meyers,

That is correct. Let me just clarify my comment about the Board member "working in this area". The Board member sent us an e-mail message from an address that includes his name and the name of a company that designs and manufactures water treatment and desalination systems. I do not know whether the Board member is employed or receives compensation from this company, and I perhaps should not have used the word "works" in this area. It appears by his e-mail address, however, that at the very least he is affiliated with this company in some capacity.

As I indicated earlier, we will not accommodate his request until after we have heard from you regarding this matter.

Regards,

Jimmy Nares  
 Assistant Director  
 Jay Malina International Trade Consortium of Miami-Dade County  
 111 NW 1st Street, Suite 2560  
 Miami, FL 33128  
 (305) 375-4626  
 nares@miamidade.gov

**From:** Meyers, Robert (COE)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 28, 2009 4:17 PM  
**To:** Nares, Dimitrios (ITC)  
**Subject:** RE: Commission on Ethics Opinion

2/2/2009

Jimmy:

Thank you for your question. I am somewhat perplexed by one of the statements in your request. Specifically, you state in the third paragraph that one of your board members asked you to find out if anyone in the Sierra Leone delegation is interested in water treatment and desalinization equipment for Sierra Leone because he works in that area, and if there was some interest, to provide him with contact information. Am I reading this correctly?

Once you clarify this matter, I will send you a follow up opinion.

Thanks,

Robert Meyers

**From:** Nares, Dimitrios (ITC)  
**Sent:** Friday, January 23, 2009 12:42 PM  
**To:** Meyers, Robert (COE)  
**Subject:** FW: Commission on Ethics Opinion

Hello Mr. Meyers,

I would like to request an Ethics Opinion on a specific request from a member of the ITC Board of Directors. Even though we have requested other opinions from you in the past regarding involvement of our Board members, this situation is slightly different. I would like to get your opinion before proceeding now, or in future such situations.

Our agency recently coordinated a visit by a delegation from Sierra Leone, which was headed by the Vice-President and a number of Ministers. We organized a tour of the Airport and Seaport and were involved in arranging for them to meet the full BCC during yesterday's session. During the BCC meeting the Vice President said that they were here to increase trade and cultural relations between the two countries, and because his country was ravaged by civil war for a number of years, also welcomed foreign investment and business opportunities.

A member of our Board has asked us to find out if anyone in the delegation is interested in water treatment and desalinization equipment for Sierra Leon (which is his line of work), and if so, for contacts.

As we know from past inquiries, member of our Board should not use their affiliation with the ITC, or the County, to further their personal business, as it may provide an unfair advantage over others. Yet, by virtue of yesterday's BCC meeting and subsequent media coverage, the visit was public knowledge.

From a previous opinion that you rendered (see yellow highlight below), I would infer hat we would be able to provide such information to this Board member, and he would be able to seek business opportunities, so long as he did not do so by assuming his official capacity as an ITC Board member, or a representative of the Mayor. In other words, he would be able to contact them by phone or electronically, but must never mention that he sits on the ITC Board or is a representative of the Mayor.

Before we proceed, please provide us with your Ethics opinion regarding this matter.

Regards,

Jimmy Nares  
Assistant Director  
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2/2/2009

nares@miamidade.gov

**From:** Ojeda, Tony (ITC)  
**Sent:** Friday, August 29, 2008 4:57 PM  
**To:** 'Oses, Albert'  
**Cc:** Dreyfus-Ulvert, Maria (ITC); Alufohai, Desmond U. (ITC); Nares, Dimitrios (ITC)  
**Subject:** Commission on Ethics Opinion

Albert:

Please find below the opinion rendered by the Commission on Ethics regarding ITC Board members' participation and involvement on the mission to Peru and Chile. The original memo was written to Lee Sandler of the GMCC.

Tony Ojeda

**From:** Meyers, Robert (COE)  
**To:** Lee Sandler  
**Cc:** Ojeda, Tony (ITC)  
**Sent:** Fri Aug 29 14:00:42 2008  
**Subject:** RE: Question  
Lee,

I spoke to Tony Ojeda and Commissioner Seijas as well. As understand it, the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce and the county's International Trade Consortium (ITC) will be going on a joint mission to Chile and Peru later this year. Tony Ojeda advised me that the joint mission was approved by the ITC Board. Two of the chamber members who also sit on the ITC board will be part of the mission. According to Tony, the trade mission's programmatic content includes a government component consisting of presentations by Commissioner Seijas, Mr. Ojeda, representatives of the county's airport and seaport and the private sector chair of the ITC. Another part of the program includes a forum organized by the Greater Miami Chamber where experts in specific fields – law, real estate, engineering, to name a few – will make presentations. There will be an opportunity for individuals on the mission to participate in a matchmaking session. Finally, profiles of members who are part of trade delegation will be available and circulated during the mission.

The purpose of the private sector forum is to be informative and assist those in Chile and Peru who may want to do business in Miami-Dade. It is conceivable that technical questions will be asked of the experts who will be presenting and it might be appropriate to refer these matters to local (Miami-Dade) individuals or firms. The issue then is whether the two members of the ITC Board who are participating in the private sector forum may promote their businesses and themselves in their presentations and conversations with Chilean and Peruvian business owners without exploiting their official positions as ITC Board members.

I offer two suggestions to prevent any violations of the county's ethics ordinance. First, the profiles of the two ITC Board members who will be speaking at the private sector forum should be devoid of any reference to their affiliation with the county's ITC. Secondly, when the two board members are introduced at the private sector forum, their relationship with Miami-Dade County government should not be mentioned and the speakers should avoid any references to their service to the ITC as well.

If you have any questions concerning the above, please do not hesitate to contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Robert Meyers, Executive Director  
Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics and Public Trust

J.A. Ojeda, Jr.

2/2/2009

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