



Ohio Department of Natural Resources

MIKE DeWINE, GOVERNOR

MARY MERTZ, DIRECTOR

June 23, 2020

Randall Meyer
Ohio Inspector General
30 E. Broad Street, Suite 2940
Columbus, Ohio 43215

RE: Report of Investigation 2019-CA00007

Dear Inspector General Meyer,

I am writing in response to the recommendation made in your Report of Investigation 2019-CA00007. I appreciate the input and guidance provided in your report as my administration takes seriously the importance of instructing employees on their obligations under Ohio's ethics laws. In furtherance of this, in 2019 every ODNR employee had to complete a one-hour *Ohio Ethics Law E-Course* developed by the Ohio Ethics Commission.¹ This, or a substantially similar ethics law course will continue to be required yearly. In addition, in-house counsel has conducted at least fourteen in-person trainings on Ohio's ethics laws to staff throughout the Agency, including providing an Ohio ethics overview to new hires at or around the time they onboard with ODNR.

Understanding the need for continuous improvement, ODNR also previously requested from the Ohio Ethics Commission the training recommended in your report. On March 2, 2020, ODNR invited a member of the Ohio Ethics Commission to come out and provide 1.5 hours of instruction on Ohio's ethics laws. This training was attended by members of senior leadership and the leadership of each division of the agency. This presentation included a comprehensive discussion of donations and services connected to regulated entities.

This administration will continue to place a high priority on informing its employees of their obligations under Ohio's ethics laws and plans to conduct additional trainings to its staff in the coming year. Each of these trainings will include instruction on the specific ethics laws that apply to accepting gifts or services from entities regulated by ODNR.

We appreciate the opportunity to share our response. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about these actions.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mary C. Mertz". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Mary C. Mertz
Director

¹ There were, however, a few employees who were out of the office on extended disability leave during the last months of 2019 who were unable to complete this training.