TEXAS TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

TRAVEL DIVISION **MINUTE ORDER**

The Abilene Convention and Visitors Bureau (AC&VB) proposes to donate food, beverage, and admission and transportation to area attractions to the Texas Department of Transportation (department) as part of its hosting the 51st Annual Texas Travel Counselors Conference in Abilene, Texas on April 17 - 20, 2006. The donation is worth approximately $24,550 and has been solicited from various sponsors.

This donation has been examined by department personnel. The department recommends issuance of this minute order on the ground that acceptance of the donation is in the best interest and welfare of the traveling public.

Transportation Code, §201.206, authorizes the department to accept a donation in any form, including realty, personalty, money, materials, and services, for the purpose of carrying out its functions and duties. Government Code, Chapter 575, requires the governing board of a state agency to acknowledge the acceptance of a donation valued at $500 or more by majority vote at an open meeting, not later than the 60th day after the date the donation is accepted. It also prohibits a state agency from accepting a donation from a person who is a party to a contested case before the agency until the 30th day after the date the decision in the case becomes final.

The Texas Transportation Commission (commission) has adopted 43 TAC §§1.500-1.506, which relate to the department's acceptance of donations. Section 1.503 prohibits acceptance of a gift or donation when the donor is subject to department regulation or oversight or when the donor is interested in or likely to become interested in any contract, purchase, payment, or claim with or against the department, except as provided by that section. It also provides that the commission may approve the acceptance of a donation, notwithstanding the foregoing proscriptions in the rules, if it determines that acceptance would provide a significant public benefit and would not influence or reasonably appear to influence the department in the performance of its duties.

The commission finds that the donation will further the department's responsibilities and that the donor is not a party to a contested case before the department and has not been a party to a contested case before the department during the last 30 days. The commission also finds that some of the sponsors may be interested in or likely to become interested in a contract, purchase, payment, or claim with or against the department. Nonetheless, the commission has determined that acceptance of the donation would provide a significant public benefit and would not influence or reasonably appear to influence the department in the performance of its duties.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED by the commission that the estimated donation of $24,550 by AC&VB is accepted. The executive director or the executive director's designee is authorized to execute all necessary documents under 43 TAC §1.504 to effect the acceptance of the donation.

Submitted and reviewed by:

Assistant Executive Director, Support Operations

Recommended by:

M. W. Behrens

Executive Director

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Minute Number | Date Passed