

December 28, 2022

**Mr. Scott F. Thompson
Alternate Designated Agency Ethics Official
Office of the General Counsel
Department of Defense
Washington, DC 20301**

Dear Mr. Thompson:

The purpose of this letter is to describe the steps that I will take to avoid any actual or apparent conflict of interest in the event that I am confirmed for the position of Assistant Secretary of Defense for Energy, Installations, and Environment, Department of Defense. It is my responsibility to understand and comply with commitments outlined in this agreement.

SECTION 1 – GENERAL COMMITMENTS

As required by the criminal conflicts of interest law at 18 U.S.C. § 208(a), I will not participate personally and substantially in any particular matter in which I know that I have a financial interest directly and predictably affected by the matter, or in which I know that a person whose interests are imputed to me has a financial interest directly and predictably affected by the particular matter, unless I first obtain a written waiver, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 208(b)(1), or qualify for a regulatory exemption, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 208(b)(2). I understand that the interests of the following persons are imputed to me:

- Any spouse or minor child of mine;**
- Any general partner of a partnership in which I am a limited or general partner;**
- Any organization in which I serve as an officer, director, trustee, general partner, or employee; and**
- Any person or organization with which I am negotiating or have an arrangement concerning prospective employment.**

In the event that an actual or potential conflict of interest arises during my appointment, I will consult with an agency ethics official and take the measures necessary to resolve the conflict, such as recusal from the particular matter or divestiture of an asset.

If I have a managed account or otherwise use the services of an investment professional during my appointment, I will ensure that the account manager or investment professional obtains my prior approval on a case-by-case basis for the purchase of any assets other than cash, cash equivalents, investment funds that qualify for the regulatory exemption for diversified mutual funds and unit investment trusts at 5 C.F.R. § 2640.201(a), obligations of the United States, or municipal bonds.

I will receive a live ethics briefing from a member of the ethics office after my confirmation but not later than 7 days after my appointment pursuant to the ethics program regulation at 5 C.F.R. § 2638.305. Within 90 days of my confirmation, I will submit my Certification of Ethics Agreement Compliance which documents my compliance with this ethics agreement.

I understand that as an appointee I will be required to sign the Ethics Pledge (Exec. Order No. 13989) and that I will be bound by it. Among other obligations, I will be required to recuse from particular matters involving specific parties involving my former employer or former clients for a period of two years after I am appointed, with the exception of federal, state and local government.

I will not modify this ethics agreement without your approval and the approval of the U.S. Office of Government Ethics pursuant to the ethics agreement requirements contained in the financial disclosure regulation at 5 C.F.R. § 2634.803(a)(4).

SECTION 2 – BLACK VEST STRATEGY LLC

I am the sole owner of my consulting company which does business as Black Vest Strategy, LLC. I ceased providing services through this company in November 2022. Upon my confirmation, Black Vest Strategy, LLC will continue to not engage in any business including representation of clients. During my appointment to the position of Assistant Secretary of Defense for Energy, Installations, and Environment, Black Vest Strategy, LLC will remain dormant and will not advertise. I will not perform any services for the company, except that I will comply with any requirements involving legal filings, taxes and fees that are necessary to maintain the company while it is in an inactive status. As Assistant Secretary, I will not participate personally and substantially in any particular matter that to my knowledge has a direct and predictable effect on the financial interests of Black Vest Strategy, LLC. All amounts owed to me by any of my clients will be fixed before I assume the duties of the position of Assistant Secretary, and I will not participate personally and substantially in any particular matter that to my knowledge has a direct and predictable effect on the ability or willingness of any of these clients to pay these amounts. In addition, pursuant to the impartiality regulation at 5 C.F.R. § 2635.502, I will not participate personally and substantially in any particular matter involving specific parties in which I know a former client of mine is a party or represents a party for a period of one year after I last provided service to that client, unless I am first authorized to participate, pursuant to 5 C.F.R. § 2635.502(d).

SECTION 3 – ECOUNTABL, Inc.

I resigned from my position with Ecountabl, Inc. in October 2022. I currently hold stock in the company. I do not hold any unvested stock, stock options or restricted stock. I will not participate personally and substantially in any particular matter that to my knowledge has a direct and predictable effect on the financial interests of Ecountabl, Inc. unless I first obtain a written waiver, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 208(b)(1), or qualify for a regulatory exemption, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 208(b)(2).

SECTION 4 – OTHER RESIGNATIONS

I resigned from my position with New Buildings Institute in October 2022. Pursuant to the impartiality regulation at 5 C.F.R. § 2635.502, for a period of one year after my resignation, I will not participate personally and substantially in any particular matter involving specific parties in which I know New Buildings Institute is a party or represents a party, unless I am first authorized to participate, pursuant to 5 C.F.R. § 2635.502(d).

SECTION 5 – SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT

My spouse is employed at Valley Drive Pre-School in a position for which she receives a fixed annual salary. Pursuant to the impartiality regulation at 5 C.F.R. § 2635.502, for as long as my spouse continues to work for Valley Drive Pre-School, I will not participate personally and substantially in any particular matter involving specific parties in which I know that entity is a party or represents a party, unless I am first authorized to participate, pursuant to at 5 C.F.R. § 2635.502(d).

SECTION 6 – PUBLIC POSTING

I have been advised that this ethics agreement and the Certification of Ethics Agreement Compliance will be posted publicly, consistent with the public information law at 5 U.S.C. § 552, on the website of the U.S. Office of Government Ethics with ethics agreements of other Presidential nominees who file public financial disclosure reports.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brendan Owens", written in a cursive style.

Brendan Owens