From: alysanchez@netscape.net
To: Contact OGE
Subject: Proposed Rule: Legal Expense Fund Regulation (RIN 3209-AA50)
Date: Friday, June 17, 2022 10:42:20 AM

I oppose OGE's proposed legal expense fund regulation in its current form. It should not be optional for elected officials to follow ethics rules that prevent significant areas of potential corruption and grift. "Sunshine" and opt-in are not adequate disinfectants or guardrails for protecting the public trust and public funds. The person with the potential conflict should not be the arbiter of whether they should recuse. There should not continue to be an option for a 523 legal defense fund to be used to bully and financially pressure potential witnesses. Any official receiving benefit from such a fund should not be able to simultaneously work on legislation benefiting those donors and only recuse for a year. OGE should:

- Make compliance with the regulation required;
- Replace the proposed recusal requirement with a broader 5-year recusal requirement that prevents donors of cash gifts from influencing decisions, policies, or regulations affecting them or the industries in which they have substantial interests;
- Unless you are actually going to prevent the practice--remove the offensive example involving an accused sexual harasser, as it stands as a threat unless the regulation actually prevents the practice; and
- Allowing nonprofit charities 501(c)(3) organizations to hire legal counsel for whistleblowers-the tax classification designating organizations as working in the public interest should not be excluded from helping enforce the language and intent of established whistleblower protections.

The last administration showed and exploited the cracks in federal ethics regulations, places where "norms" were the only line, places where weak regulations could be leveraged or simply ignored. When cracks in a foundation are shown to exist, the job is to fix it. In any company I've worked on, on any board I've served on, within any association I've been a member of -- that is what is expected: fix the problems, restore the trust.

Thank you,
Aly Sanchez
Albuquerque, New Mexico