

Dear City of New Orleans Ethics Review Board:

The Greater New Orleans Interfaith Climate Coalition stands with the poor and the afflicted in pursuing climate justice. Perhaps nowhere is climate justice more important than in how utilities are managed. It is the poor in fence line communities that suffer disproportionately from the pollution of fossil fuel electrical production, and it is the poor that pay a disproportionately large part of their income to keep cool in the summer and warm in the winter. Further, the poor have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 which especially victimizes those whose lungs have been weakened by pollution from fossil fuel power plants. (Source: Harvard study linking particulate matter and COVID-19 deaths). However, the current Ethics Code does not prohibit campaign contributions and other financial benefits from rich and powerful utilities to City Councilmembers who regulate them. Therefore, it is essential that the City Council is not subject to this influence that is to the detriment of the poor and all our citizens. As the Psalmist of the Judeo-Christian tradition says, "For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now I will arise, saith the Lord".

For these reasons, we recommend that the Ethics Review Board recommend to the City Council the following language as an amendment to the Ethics Code of the City of New Orleans:

- I. No City Councilmember or candidate seeking the office of City Councilmember shall accept or otherwise receive a campaign contribution or any other financial benefit of any value from:
 - a. Entergy, Cox Communications or other entity that provides a utility, cable, telecommunications or technology service regulated by the City Council;
 - b. Any political action committee, director or executive staff person of a corporation or entity regulated by the City Council;
 - c. Any person employed in the executive management of the New Orleans Sewerage and Water Board;
 - d. Any person, firm or entity with a professional services contract awarded by or pertaining to the City Council; or
 - e. Any person, firm or entity with a professional service contract awarded by or pertaining to the New Orleans Sewerage and Water Board.
- II. No later than 30 days from the deadline of qualifying as a candidate for the office of City Councilmember, the candidate shall submit an affidavit to the New Orleans Ethics Review Board and the City Law Department that affirms or denies the following:
 - a. Acceptance of compensation or financial benefit of any value from an entity regulated by the City Council or contracted to provide a service to the City Council in the last five years; and/or
 - b. Any time served on the board of a corporation or entity that is either regulated by the City Council or contracted to provide a service to the City Council.

We further request that the Ethics Review Board consider our recommended amendment to the Ethics Code during the next meeting that is scheduled on July 12, 2021. We would appreciate the opportunity to make a presentation at this meeting.

Thank you for your consideration.

Pastor Gregory Manning, Chair and Founder

Greater New Orleans Interfaith Climate Coalition

cc. City Council

cc. GNOICC Steering Committee