
LOS ANGELES CITY ETHICS COMMISSION

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**EXCESS CONTRIBUTION TO NON-CANDIDATE COMMITTEE ALLEGED
IN PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF ENFORCEMENT CASE**

The Executive Director of the Los Angeles City Ethics Commission today issued a public announcement that there is probable cause to believe that Stewart Lee Herrera violated City law by making a contribution in excess of the voter-enacted Charter limit to a committee that raised funds to make independent expenditures in the City's 2005 General Election. The Accusation charges that Mr. Herrera violated the contribution limits established by Charter Section 470(c)(5) when he made a \$1,000 contribution to the "Ballona Wetlands Committee to Stop Playa Vista." Los Angeles City Charter Section 470(c)(5) limits contributions a person can make to any committee (other than a candidate controlled committee) that supports or opposes any candidate for Mayor, City Attorney, Controller, or City Council to \$500 per calendar year. The announcement by Executive Director LeeAnn Pelham was made following her finding of probable cause and according to public disclosure procedures required by City law.

The matter will now go to the agency's five-member Ethics Commission for an administrative hearing to determine if a violation occurred. Procedurally, the Commission may 1) conduct its own hearing, 2) hear the matter itself with a hearing officer presiding, or 3) refer the matter to a hearing officer for a preliminary recommendation. The City Charter Section 706(c) authorizes the Commission to levy fines of up to \$5,000 for each violation or three times the amount that was failed to be reported, or that was unlawfully contributed or expended, whichever is greater. As in all cases referred to the Commission for an administrative hearing, a respondent is presumed innocent of any violation of City law, unless and until such time that the violation is proved in an administrative hearing held pursuant to Charter Section 706 (c).

The Commission and its staff may not comment on this matter until after a final determination has been made. A copy of the Accusation can be obtained by calling the Commission at (213) 978-1960.

The City Ethics Commission is a semi-independent agency created by Los Angeles voters in 1990 to impartially administer and enforce the governmental ethics, campaign finance, and lobbying laws of the City of Los Angeles. With a staff of 27 and an operating budget of \$2.3 million, the Commission conducts training, provides advice, audits political campaigns, and makes legislative recommendations. It also is authorized by the voters to conduct investigations and levy administrative penalties against violators of the laws under its jurisdiction.