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Opening remarks before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics

Honourable Konrad von Finckenstein, C.M., K.C. –
Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner
Ottawa, Ontario, October 28, 2026

Honourable Chair, I am pleased to appear before the Committee today.

Thank you for inviting me to discuss the Privy Council Office's most recent quarterly report on the Prime Minister's conflict of interest screen.

It might be helpful to first briefly review what conflict of interest screens are and how they work.

A conflict of interest screen is an agreed tool that the Commissioner's Office can set up if it is likely that an appointed official will be involved in discussions or decisions where there is a conflict of interest.

We do not, however, administer them. Instead, two senior officials from the department or organization approved by the Commissioner's Office are tasked with managing their screen.

The screen administrators make sure that matters related to any conflicts described in the screen are not brought to the official's attention. They give the files to other designated people to handle. They also keep the official out of any discussions, decisions, debates or votes about those files.

The administrators of the Prime Minister's screen make sure he does not see any files or attend any meetings related to the companies identified in it. In effect, they handle his schedule.

The *Conflict of Interest Act* requires appointed officials to recuse themselves from a discussion, decision, debate or vote in which they have a conflict of interest. Recusing means leaving the room, physically or virtually.

Screens help them avoid the need for recusal, by helping them avoid situations that might pose a conflict of interest.

If a matter that should have been caught by the screen—or any other matter in which they have a conflict of interest—does come before them, they must recuse. Recusals because of a conflict of interest must be disclosed to the Commissioner's Office and will be posted on our website.

The Prime Minister put all of his assets into a blind trust. However, he, of course, knows what assets are in the trust. To avoid that he knowingly takes decisions that have an effect on these assets, he also established a conflict of interest screen. The Prime Minister's conflict of interest screen is designed to prevent conflicts of interest involving Brookfield Asset Management, Brookfield Corporation, Stripe Inc., and companies owned or controlled by them. It is administered by his Chief of Staff and the Clerk of the Privy Council.

They have been entrusted with ensuring that the screen is applied appropriately. It is in their interest, as well as in the Prime Minister's, to ensure that he meets his obligations under the *Conflict of Interest Act*. The Commissioner's Office is available to provide guidance, as needed, to support them in carrying out this responsibility.

While the Office is not involved in the administration of the conflict of interest screen, we give advice on its administration when requested.

I will be happy to answer the Committee's questions.