



PRESENTATIONS & SPEECHES

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

Honourable Konrad W. von Finckenstein, C.M., K.C. –
Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner
Ottawa, Ontario, June 4, 2024

Thank you for inviting me.

With me today is Lyne Robinson-Dalpé, Director of Advisory and Compliance.

As we join you today, I recognize the weight of responsibility entrusted upon our Office and the work of this committee. Our democracy relies fundamentally on the integrity and transparency of its elected and appointed officials and our ability to safeguard public trust.

It is with these principles in mind that I see the twofold purpose of the regimes we administer: one, is to help public officials avoid and manage their conflicts of interest, and the second, is to facilitate the movement of qualified people in and out of the public service.

Qualified, competent, and experienced people who are called to public service may well face conflicts of interest. This is not unusual. The issue is how to avoid and manage those conflicts to protect the integrity of officials and of the institutions they serve.

Minister Boissonnault is an example of someone who has moved in and out of public service, and back again. Upon his first election as a Member of Parliament in 2015, he complied with the *Conflict of Interest Code for Members of the House of Commons*.

He also complied with the *Conflict of Interest Act* when later appointed as Parliamentary Secretary.

Between 2019 and 2021, when he was not an elected or appointed official, he resumed work with Xennex Catalyst Inc. (Xennex), a company incorporated in 2000 and which he owns 100%. It is a management company which gained a contract to lobby on behalf of Edmonton Regional Airports Authority.

The Minister resigned as director of Xennex when he was re-elected and became, again, subject to the Code as a Member and to the Act as Minister.

Kirsten Poon became Director of Xennex and continued to lobby in Xennex's name on behalf of the Edmonton Regional Airports Authority until June 2021. After that date, the lobbying was done in her own company's name, 2050877 Alberta Ltd. operating as Navis.

Minister Boissonnault received no remuneration from Xennex after being elected and appointed Minister. However, he disclosed that he was owed outstanding business income from Navis. That amount was paid by Navis to Xennex.

Minister Boissonnault has a 100% interest in 2256956 Alberta Ltd. It in turn owns 50% of the affiliated company Global Health Imports. His ownership of Xennex, 2256956 Alberta Ltd., and indirect partial ownership of Global Health Imports were all disclosed to the Office. There is no disclosed evidence that ownership of these companies creates any conflict of interest. He complied with the rules under the Act and the Code.

Considering the information that Minister Boissonnault has disclosed to the Office, it appears he has complied with the requirements of the Code and the Act related to matters involving his companies and consequently there is no need to commence an examination.

We are in the process of the usual annual review process with the Minister and will be looking at all his updated disclosures with the Office.

Both Ms. Robinson-Dalpe and I are prepared to answer any questions you may have about the compliance process and the work of the Office.