



MONTGOMERY COUNTY ETHICS COMMISSION

February 11, 2026

Waiver 26-02-001

Pursuant to § 19A-12(b)(1)(B) of the Public Ethics Law, a public employee must not be employed by a business that negotiates or contracts with the County agency with which the public employee is affiliated, unless the Ethics Commission grants a waiver.

Travis Gorleski is a Senior Business Development Specialist in the Montgomery County Office of Agriculture (“OAG”). He would like to engage in outside employment as the Financial Secretary at Montgomery Weed Control, Inc. (“MWC”), an entity which receives funding from OAG.

As a Senior Business Development Specialist with OAG, Mr. Gorleski focuses his work on equine producers as well as some smaller specialty crop producers in Montgomery County. He provides technical assistance with soil and water conservation efforts, as well as assistance to producers in accessing federal, state and local funding sources to offset the costs associated with infrastructure improvements that lead to improvements in water quality, soil health and vegetative productivity of their lands. He also writes nutrient management plans, creates educational materials to promote agricultural best practices, and collaborates with federal and state agencies for such programs.

In his proposed outside employment at MWC, Mr. Gorleski would be the bookkeeper for the organization. In that role, he would log payroll and materials used in MWC operations, provide statements to management and ensure financial information is supplied from crews and supervisors so it can be accurately accounted for.

Mr. Gorleski would have no contract monitoring, procurement or execution responsibilities in his role with MWC, and he has no contract monitoring responsibilities in his official capacity with OAG either.

MWC contracts with OAG but Mr. Gorleski’s role as the Financial Secretary with MWC is not funded by the County contract with MWC. The vast majority of MWC’s operating budget is from services rendered. The County provides less than 5% of the organization’s operating budget in connection with a program meant to offset the cost of operating a farm in Montgomery County. MWC has provided assurances that the funds used to pay Mr. Gorleski’s salary will be not be paid from money received from OAG.

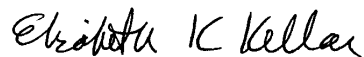
Mr. Gorleski acknowledges that there is a possibility of some OAG clients joining the MWC board of directors. But he has vowed that, if this occurs, he will recuse himself from any MWC dealings with that individual.

Pursuant to § 19A-8(b)(3) of the Public Ethics Law, the Ethics Commission may grant a waiver of the prohibition of § 19A-12(b) if the Ethics Commission concludes that the proposed employment is not likely to create an actual conflict of interest. Upon reviewing the request and the Department's concurrence in and support for the waiver request, the Commission finds that there is no actual conflict of interest. Pursuant to the standard of § 19A-8(b)(3), the Commission grants the waiver of the prohibition of § 19A-12(b).

The Commission notes that while 19A-12(b)'s prohibition is waived, the other provisions of the ethics law are not, including those prohibiting an employee from working on official matters relating to the outside employer. The approval of this waiver is conditioned on the facts upon which the waiver is based remaining unchanged. It is also conditioned on Mr. Gorleski not making referrals as a County employee to MWC. He will pass any OAG clients needing such a referral to a colleague at OAG.

This waiver expires when the outside employment approval with which it is associated expires, unless a continuation request for outside employment is timely filed and subsequently approved by the Ethics Commission. In reaching this decision, the Commission has relied upon the facts as presented by Mr. Gorleski.

For the Commission:



Elizabeth Kellar, Chair