

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

FOR COMMISSION USE ONLY:
CASE NUMBER
C 2023-096

COMPLAINT FORM

COMPLAINANT: State Ethics Commission
ADDRESS: 201 Executive Center Drive
Suite 150
Columbia, SC 29210
TELEPHONE NUMBER: (803) 253-4192

RESPONDENT: Christopher W. Cox
ADDRESS: [REDACTED]
TELEPHONE NUMBER: [REDACTED]
TITLE: Councilman – Town of Troy

Section 8-13-1140, SC Code Ann., 1976, as amended, requires the filing of an updated Statement of Economic Interests for the previous calendar year annually thereafter prior to March 30. Records in the State Ethics Commission indicate that the Respondent was required to file the 2020 and 2023 Statement of Economic Interests.

Section 8-13-1308, S.C. Code Ann., 1976, as amended, requires candidates to file Campaign Disclosures within ten (10) days of receiving or expending \$500; fifteen (15) days prior to each election; within ten (10) days of the end of each quarter; and a final report when the campaign account is closed. In addition, certified campaign reports detailing campaign contributions and expenditures must contain the total of contributions accepted, the name and address of each person making a contribution, the total expenditures made by or on behalf of the candidate or committee, and the name and address of each person to whom an expenditure is made from campaign funds. Pursuant to Section 8-13-1362 and Regulation 52-504 (C), the Pre-Election and quarterly report are required even when there have been no contributions or expenditures. Records of the State Ethics Commission indicate that a Pre-Election Campaign Disclosure was due between October 19, 2022 and October 24, 2022.

Respondent was reminded of the filing requirements by a certified letter dated November 4, 2022 as described in the attached. To date, a properly completed Pre-Election Campaign Disclosure, 2020 Statement of Economic Interests, and 2023 Statement of Economic Interests have not been received. All in violation of Section 8-13-1140, Section 8-13-1308(A), Section 8-13-1308(D)(1), and Section 8-13-1308 (F), S.C. Code Ann., 1976, as amended.

If there is a finding of probable cause, the following documents become public record: the complaint, the response (if any) by respondent, and the notice of hearing. If a hearing is to be held, the final order and all exhibits become public record. If no hearing is held following a finding of probable cause, the final disposition of the matter becomes public record.

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF Richland

Personally appeared before me Meghan Walker Dayson who, first being duly sworn, says that she has read and knows the contents of the above complaint and that the allegations contained therein, are true and correct to the best of her own knowledge, except for those matters therein based upon information and belief, and as to those she believes them to be true.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this
26th day of JULY, 2023

[REDACTED]
Meghan Walker Dayson, Executive Director

[REDACTED]
Notary Public for South Carolina
My Commission expires 03/22/26

SEC-7 (Revised 3/2022)

REPLY TO: 201 Executive Center Drive, Suite 150, Columbia, South Carolina 29210 (803)253-4192
ELECTRONIC COPIES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA)	
COUNTY OF RICHLAND)	BEFORE THE STATE ETHICS COMMISSION
)	
IN THE MATTER OF:)	
)	
Complaint C2023-096)	
)	
State Ethics Commission)	NOTICE OF HEARING
Complainant.)	
)	
Christopher W. Cox)	
Respondent.)	
_____)	

The State Ethics Commission has determined that there is probable cause pursuant to Section 8-13-320(10)(i), Code of Laws, South Carolina, 1976, as amended, in the above-captioned complaint. The Commission will convene a formal hearing into the matter in accordance with Section 8-13-320(10)(i) & (j), Code of Laws, South Carolina, 1976, as amended, and State Ethics Commission Regulations, S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 52-707 (1997 Cum. Supp.) on Thursday, April 18, 2023 at 9:30 a.m. at the Commission Hearing Room located at: 201 Executive Center Drive, Suite 150, Columbia, South Carolina 29210.

The following allegations will be heard:

COUNT ONE
FAILURE TO FILE A PRE-ELECTION CAMPAIGN DISCLOSURE REPORT
SECTION 8-13-1308(A), S.C. CODE ANN., 1976, AS AMENDED

That Christopher W. Cox, Town of Troy Councilmember, did in Richland County, fail to file a 2022 Pre-Election Campaign Disclosure Report, in violation of Section 8-13-1308(A).

COUNT TWO
FAILURE TO FILE STATEMENT OF ECONOMIC INTERESTS
SECTION 8-13-1140, S.C. CODE ANN., 1976, AS AMENDED

That Christopher W. Cox, Town of Troy Councilmember, did in Richland County, fail to file a 2020 Statement of Economic Interests (SEI), in violation of Section 8-13-1140.

COUNT THREE
FAILURE TO FILE STATEMENT OF ECONOMIC INTERESTS
SECTION 8-13-1140, S.C. CODE ANN., 1976, AS AMENDED

That Christopher W. Cox, Town of Troy Councilmember, did in Richland County, fail to file a 2023 SEI, in violation of Section 8-13-1140.

You have the right to be represented by counsel, the right to call and examine witnesses, the right to introduce exhibits, and the right to cross-examine opposing witnesses. This hearing will be open to the public as required by Section 8-13-320(10)(j), Code of Laws, South Carolina, 1976, as amended. The procedures to be followed are set forth in the Administrative Procedures Act, Section 1-23-10, et seq., Code of Laws, South Carolina, 1976 as amended, the State Ethics Act, Section 8-13-100, et seq., Code of Laws, South Carolina, 1976, as amended, and State Ethics Commission Regulations, S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 52-707 (1997 Cum. Supp.).

A pre-hearing conference may be scheduled prior to the hearing to allow exchange of witness lists and evidence, marking of exhibits, and disposition of motions or pleadings. In the event you fail to appear, judgment by default will be rendered against you. If there are any questions concerning the above notice or hearing times, please contact the State Ethics Commission.

Dated this 17th day,
of October 2023.


Meghan Walker Dayson, Executive Director
State Ethics Commission

Certificate of Service by Certified Mail

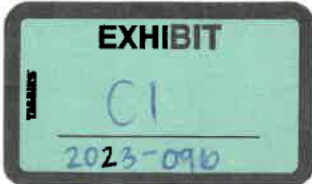
I hereby certify that a copy of this **NOTICE OF HEARING** was duly served on the RESPONDENT Christopher W. Cox, 208 Church Street West, Troy, SC 29848 by depositing said **NOTICE OF HEARING** in the United States mail, Columbia, South Carolina on this 11th day of October 2023, by **CERTIFIED MAIL, E-RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED**, appropriate postage affixed, and a return address clearly indicated on said envelope.



Rachael O'Bryan, Administrative Assistant
State Ethics Commission

Columbia, South Carolina

(803) 253-4192



STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

FOR COMMISSION USE ONLY:
CASE NUMBER
C 2023-096

COMPLAINT FORM

COMPLAINANT: State Ethics Commission
ADDRESS: 201 Executive Center Drive
Suite 150
Columbia, SC 29210
TELEPHONE NUMBER: (803) 253-4192

RESPONDENT: Christopher W. Cox
ADDRESS: [REDACTED]
TELEPHONE NUMBER: [REDACTED]
TITLE: Councilman - Town of Troy

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STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF Richland

Personally appeared before me Meghan Walker Dayson who, first being duly sworn, says that she has read and knows the contents of the above complaint and that the allegations contained therein, are true and correct to the best of her own knowledge, except for those matters therein based upon information and belief, and as to those she believes them to be true.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 26th day of JULY, 2023

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Meghan Walker Dayson, Executive Director

Notary Public for South Carolina
My Commission expires 01/22/26

SEC-7 (Revised 3/2022)

REPLY TO: 201 Executive Center Drive, Suite 150, Columbia, South Carolina 29210 (803)253-4192
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C102form

Christopher W. Cox

November 4, 2022: \$200.00 penalty letter is sent certified for failure to file a Pre-Election Campaign Disclosure between October 19, 2022 and October 24, 2022 and a 2020 Statement of Economic Interests

November 9, 2022: According to the United States Postal Service, the certified letter is "Delivered, Front Desk/Reception/Mail Room."

November 19, 2022: Penalties begin accruing at \$20 per day for the first ten days

November 29, 2022: Penalties begin accruing at \$200 per day

June 29, 2023: Legal Department staff calls Mr. Cox. The phone number listed in his account is disconnected. A CLEAR report shows four additional numbers; however, none of them are in service. Legal Department staff also tries to call the Town of Troy, but the line is busy. She also sends an email but doesn't receive a response.

July 19, 2023: After no response, complaint is filed.

Previous or Current Non-Compliance

Pre-Election Campaign Disclosure (due 10-22-12)	Penalty waived
2019 Statement of Economic Interests	Setoff

MASC Municipal Association of South CarolinaSM

Town of Troy

Street Address: 1518 Neel St
Troy, SC 29848
Mailing Address: PO BOX 218
Troy, SC 29848-0218
Phone: 864.746.6100
Website: www.facebook.com/townoftroysc

Population: 83
County: Greenwood County
Planning District: Upper Savannah
Council of Governments
Council Meets: 1st Thu after 1st Mon, 6 p.m.
Form of Government: Mayor-Council
Election Date: 1st Tuesday after 1st Monday
in November of even years
Election Method: Nonpartisan
Method of Representation: At large
Town Hall Hours: By appointment only
Full-Time Employees: 0
Fiscal Year Start: January

State Legislators

Senator: Billy Garrett
Representative: Daniel Gibson

Elected Officials

Mayor: Brian Steven Dixon
Councilmember: Joshua Kenneth Bearden
Councilmember: Chris Cox
Councilmember: Tonya Young Dixon
Councilmember: Nate B. van Landingham

Key Municipal Personnel***

Fire Chief: Adam McCoy
Parks/Recreation Dir: Lesa K. Cotten
Public Works Dir: Billy Wade Peacock
Lead Attorney: Paul L. Agnew



November 28, 2022



Dear Lindsey New:

The following is in response to your request for proof of delivery on your item with the tracking number: **9214 8969 0099 9790 1422 4837 13.**

Item Details

Status: Delivered, Front Desk/Reception/Mail Room
Status Date / Time: November 9, 2022, 9:59 am
Location: TROY, SC 29848
Postal Product: First-Class Mail®
Extra Services: Certified Mail™
Return Receipt Electronic
Recipient Name: Mr Christopher W Cox

Recipient Signature

Signature of Recipient:	
Address of Recipient:	

Note: Scanned image may reflect a different destination address due to Intended Recipient's delivery instructions on file.

Thank you for selecting the United States Postal Service® for your mailing needs. If you require additional assistance, please contact your local Post Office™ or a Postal representative at 1-800-222-1811.

Sincerely,
United States Postal Service®
475 L'Enfant Plaza SW
Washington, D.C. 20260-0004

11-19-22: \$ 20/day
11-29-22: \$ 200/day

11/24

State of South Carolina State Ethics Commission

SCOTT E. FRICK, CHAIRMAN
AJ HOLLOWAY, VICE CHAIRMAN
BRANDOLYN THOMAS PINKSTON
BRYANT S. CALDWELL



F. XAVIER STARKES
MARY HUNTER B. TOMLINSON
NEAL D. TRUSLOW
MATTHEW N. TYLER

201 EXECUTIVE CENTER DRIVE, SUITE 150
COLUMBIA, S.C. 29210

MEGHAN L. WALKER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

November 4, 2022

CERTIFIED MAIL #: 92148969009997901422483713

Mr. Christopher W. Cox

Dear Mr. Cox:

This is not a form letter. You are receiving this letter because you are currently in violation of the Ethics Reform Act. As a Councilmember for Troy, you are subject to the Ethics Reform Act, which is the body of laws that govern public officials, public members, and public employees.

Continued delays in filing the Campaign Disclosure and Statement of Economic Interests will result in accrual of late filing penalties with a maximum penalty of \$10,000.00.

Please be advised that this letter only addresses late or missing reports, and you could still be subject to a random audit regarding illegal contributions and expenditures. Due to the new system migration in September 2021, you may see reports in your account that say, "System Created Report." This means you did not file them or filed them late in the old system. You must add any contributions or expenditures not previously reported. This will create an amendment to your system created report. If you are penalized for failure to file a Campaign Disclosure and do not have any further contributions or expenditures to disclose on the System Generated Report, please send confirmation in writing. While reviewing your Campaign Disclosures and Statements of Economic Interests, the following deficiencies were discovered:

A Pre-Election Campaign Disclosure, which was due between October 19, 2022 and October 24, 2022, has not been filed.

The 2020 Statement of Economic Interests, which was due on March 30, 2020, has not been filed.

The 2019 Statement of Economic Interests prior to taking the oath of office or entering your official responsibilities, which should have been filed prior to January 2019, was filed on March 29, 2019.

In accordance with Section 8-13-1510, South Carolina Code Ann., 1976, as amended, a late filing penalty of \$300.00 is hereby levied. If the required reports are not filed electronically within ten calendar days of receipt of this letter, additional penalties will be levied at \$10 per day per report for the first ten days and \$100 per day per report for each additional day until the penalty reaches \$5,000 per report, and a complaint will be filed against you.

If extenuating circumstances prevented you from filing the reports as required, you may file a written appeal of this late filing penalty. To file an appeal, you must do the following within ten (10) days of the date you receive this letter:

- Send a personal check or money order made payable to the State Ethics Commission
- File all missing reports online at <https://ethicsfiling.sc.gov/filing/home>
- Provide a written statement describing any extenuating circumstances and include any supporting documentation.

Please be advised that all appeals must be in writing and must follow the above directions. NO phone, fax, or e-mail appeals will be accepted. Failure to file is a misdemeanor. After the maximum civil penalty has been levied, this matter will be referred to Magistrate's Court for criminal prosecution. This matter will also be referred to the South Carolina Department of Revenue for collection, and the penalty amount and your name, address (city) and position will be posted on the State Ethics Commission's website. Please contact this office if we can provide further information.

Sincerely,



Lindsey New
Administrative Assistant

con100

U.S. Postal Service™ CERTIFIED MAIL® RECEIPT <i>Domestic Mail Only</i>	
For delivery information, visit our website at www.usps.com ®	
9214 8969 0099 9790 1422 4837 13	
Certified Mail Fee \$ 4.00	Electronic Return Receipt Requested
Extra Services & Fees (check box, add fee as appropriate)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Return Receipt (hardcopy) \$ 2.00	
<input type="checkbox"/> Return Receipt (electronic) \$	
<input type="checkbox"/> Certified Mail, Restricted Delivery \$ 20.00	
<input type="checkbox"/> Adult Signature Required \$	
<input type="checkbox"/> Adult Signature Restricted Delivery \$	
Postage \$	Postmark Date
Total Postage and Fees \$	
Send To: Mr. Christopher W. Cox	
Street, Apt. No., or PO Box No. [Redacted]	
City, State, ZIP+4	
PS Form 3800, April 2015 See Reverse for Instructions	

SEI Report 2019

No 2020 SEI
late 2019 PTO filed 3/29/19

NR 2022 PECD due 10/24/22

Disclosing Interests for: 2018

Version: Original Report

Status: Submitted March 29, 2019

PDF Generated: November 2, 2022 at 10:56:37 AM GMT-4

Your Details

Name

Christopher W Cox

Mailing Address

[REDACTED]

Phone Number

Office Phone

[REDACTED]

County

Greenwood

Positions Reported

Elected Official

City Council

Troy

Office Term 1/2019 - 11/2022

Personal Income for 2018

Private Income

Source

Income Type

No entries to display.

Income from an SC Governmental Entity

Source

Income Type

Income Amount for 2018

No entries to display.

Income from Government Contractors Associated with a Governmental Entity

Source

Amount ...

Relationship wit...

Nature of Bu...

Entity Invol...

Street Address

No entries
to display.

Candidate Listing

SCVotes.gov

11/8/2022 Town of Troy General Election

For a list of all candidates, click search without selecting any search options. You can narrow your search by making selections below. If you have questions concerning your search results, please contact your County Voter Registration office.

Office: Party:

Candidates by County: Location of Filing:

Candidate Status:

Candidate Last Name:

Candidate First Name:

Results Found: 3

Results Shown: 1-3

Office	Associated Counties	Name on Ballot	Running Mate	Party	Location of Filing	Candidate Status
Mayor, Troy	GREENWOOD	Brian S Dixon		Nonpartisan	GREENWOOD	Active
Town Council, Troy	GREENWOOD	Christopher Cox		Nonpartisan	GREENWOOD	Active
Town Council, Troy	GREENWOOD	Tonya Young Dixon		Nonpartisan	GREENWOOD	Active

Statement of Intention of Candidacy - Nonpartisan

- This form must be completed by a candidate seeking nonpartisan office. Contact the receiving authority for filing deadlines.
- The S.C. Constitution prohibits a person who has been convicted of a felony from filing for public office for 15 years after the completion of the sentence, including probation and parole time, unless previously pardoned.

Name		Christopher W Cox			
Office		Council			
County or City		Troy	Election Date		11/8/2022
Address		[REDACTED]	City	Troy	Zip
Email Address		CWcox1968@gmail.com			
Telephone		Cell	[REDACTED]	Home	Work
Voter Registration Number		242622227			
Guidelines for a Candidate's Name to appear on the ballot: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A given name or a derivative may be used ▪ The name may not contain quotations, parentheses, or other distinguishing marks ▪ Nicknames are allowed if they are used in good faith for honest purposes and do not: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Imply professional or social status ▪ Include an office or military rank ▪ Exceed 15 letters 					
Name as you wish it to appear on ballot (please print)		Christopher Cox			

Candidate's Oath	
I affirm I meet, or will meet by the time of the general or special election, the qualifications for this office.	
Candidate's Signature	[REDACTED]

To be Completed by Receiving Authority			
Date Received	8/15/2022	Time Received	11:14 AM
Received By		Receiving Authority	GW D 174 18 E
		Filing Fee Amount Paid	0

SOUTH CAROLINA
ELECTION COMMISSION

State of South Carolina
State Ethics Commission

SCOTT E. FRICK, CHAIRMAN
F. XAVIER STARKES, VICE CHAIRMAN
BRYANT S. CALDWELL
AJ HOLLOWAY



BRANDOLYN THOMAS PINKSTON
MARY HUNTER B. TOMLINSON
NEAL D. TRUSLOW
MATTHEW N. TYLER

201 EXECUTIVE CENTER DRIVE, SUITE 150
COLUMBIA, S.C. 29210

MEGHAN WALKER DAYSON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

July 26, 2023

Christopher W. Cox
[REDACTED]

Certified Mail: 92148969009997901423780286

RE: Complaint C2023-096

In the Matter of Christopher W. Cox

Dear Mr. Cox:

In accordance with Section 8-13-320(10)(a) of the Ethics Reform Act, we are providing you with a copy of a complaint filed against you. The Ethics Reform Act, which is the applicable law, may be found here: <https://www.scstatehouse.gov/code/t08c013.php>.

On July 26, 2023, in accordance with Section 8-13-320(10) Code of Laws for S.C., 1976, as amended, the State Ethics Commission reviewed the complaint provided and determined that there are sufficient facts to warrant an investigation. You will be contacted in the near future by an investigator concerning any evidence or statements you may desire to make. If you wish, you may provide a written response to the complaint, including any documentation you wish the Commission to consider. Should you retain legal counsel, please advise the Commission.

In accordance with Section 8-13-320(9) and (10), this complaint is not considered a public record unless or until there is a finding of probable cause by the Commission or unless the Respondent waives the right to confidentiality in writing to the Commission, or the Commission issues a public disposition.

Complaint procedures are outlined on our website under the link to complaints. We shall keep you informed of the status of this complaint.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
Meghan Walker Dayson
Executive Director

MWD:ro
Enclosure: Complaint



July 31, 2023

Dear Rachael Obryan:

The following is in response to your request for proof of delivery on your item with the tracking number:
9214 8969 0099 9790 1423 7802 86.


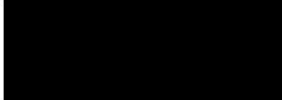
Item Details

Status:	Delivered, Left with Individual
Status Date / Time:	July 28, 2023, 9:08 am
Location:	TROY, SC 29848
Postal Product:	First-Class Mail®
Extra Services:	Certified Mail™ Return Receipt Electronic
Recipient Name:	Christopher W Cox

Shipment Details

Weight:	0.0oz
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Recipient Signature

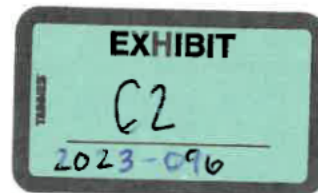
Signature of Recipient:	
Address of Recipient:	

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Sincerely,
United States Postal Service®
475 L'Enfant Plaza SW
Washington, D.C. 20260-0004

State of South Carolina
State Ethics Commission



SCOTT E. FRICK, CHAIRMAN
F. XAVIER STARKES, VICE CHAIRMAN
BRYANT S. CALDWELL
AJ HOLLOWAY



BRANDOLYN THOMAS PINKSTON
MARY HUNTER B. TOMLINSON
NEAL D. TRUSLOW
MATTHEW N. TYLER

201 EXECUTIVE CENTER DRIVE, SUITE 150
COLUMBIA, S.C. 29210

MEGHAN WALKER DAYSON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

October 11, 2023

Christopher W. Cox
[REDACTED]

Certified Mail: 92148969009997901424186179

RE: Complaint C2023-096

In the Matter of Christopher W. Cox

Dear Mr. Cox:

The State Ethics Commission has considered the above captioned complaint and has determined that probable cause exists to support the alleged violation. As a result of the Commission's determination, you are hereby provided with the Notice of Hearing. In accordance with 8-13-320 (10)(g), South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976, as amended, all complaint matters are now public upon the issuance of the Notice of Hearing.

Please be aware that under recent General Assembly amendments to the Ethics Reform Act in 2016 Act. No. 282, effective April 1, 2017, this and all other Ethics Commission hearings are now open to the public. The Ethics Commission will provide timely notice of Commission hearings to the public pursuant to the requirement of the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act.

In accordance with S.C. Code Ann. Section 1-23-320(F), in lieu of a hearing, the Commission may be agreeable to resolve this matter through an informal disposition by Consent Order. Please contact Courtney M. Laster, Esq., General Counsel, at 803-253-4192 or claster@ethics.sc.gov as soon as possible to:

- Confirm receipt of this Notice of Hearing and notify the Commission whether you will or will not attend the scheduled hearing at **9:30am, Thursday, April 18, 2024** at the State Ethics Commission Hearing Room located at: 201 Executive Center Drive Suite 150 Columbia SC 29210.
- Confirm address, telephone number and email address.
- Notify the Commission if an attorney will be representing you.

If you do not attend the hearing, a judgment by default will be rendered.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
Meghan Walker Dayson
Executive Director

MWD:ro
Enclosure: Notice of Hearing


COUNT THREE
FAILURE TO FILE STATEMENT OF ECONOMIC INTERESTS
SECTION 8-13-1140, S.C. CODE ANN., 1976, AS AMENDED

That Christopher W. Cox, Town of Troy Councilmember, did in Richland County, fail to file a 2023 SEI, in violation of Section 8-13-1140.

You have the right to be represented by counsel, the right to call and examine witnesses, the right to introduce exhibits, and the right to cross-examine opposing witnesses. This hearing will be open to the public as required by Section 8-13-320(10)(j), Code of Laws, South Carolina, 1976, as amended. The procedures to be followed are set forth in the Administrative Procedures Act, Section 1-23-10, et seq., Code of Laws, South Carolina, 1976 as amended, the State Ethics Act, Section 8-13-100, et seq., Code of Laws, South Carolina, 1976, as amended, and State Ethics Commission Regulations, S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 52-707 (1997 Cum. Supp.).

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Dated this 17th day,
of October 2023.


Meghan Walker Dayson, Executive Director
State Ethics Commission

Certificate of Service by Certified Mail

I hereby certify that a copy of this **NOTICE OF HEARING** was duly served on the **RESPONDENT** Christopher W. Cox, 208 Church Street West, Troy, SC 29848 by depositing said **NOTICE OF HEARING** in the United States mail, Columbia, South Carolina on this 11th day of October 2023, by **CERTIFIED MAIL, E-RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED**, appropriate postage affixed, and a return address clearly indicated on said envelope.



Rachael O'Bryan, Administrative Assistant
State Ethics Commission (803) 253-4192

Columbia, South Carolina



October 19, 2023

Dear Rachael OBryan:

The following is in response to your request for proof of delivery on your item with the tracking number:
9214 8969 0099 9790 1424 1861 79.



Item Details

Status:	Delivered, Left with Individual
Status Date / Time:	October 18, 2023, 8:46 am
Location:	TROY, SC 29848
Postal Product:	First-Class Mail®
Extra Services:	Certified Mail™ Return Receipt Electronic
Recipient Name:	Christopher W Cox

Shipment Details

Weight:	0.0oz
----------------	-------

Recipient Signature

Signature of Recipient:	
Address of Recipient:	

Note: Scanned image may reflect a different destination address due to Intended Recipient's delivery instructions on file.

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Sincerely,
United States Postal Service®
475 L'Enfant Plaza SW
Washington, D.C. 20260-0004

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA)	
COUNTY OF RICHLAND)	BEFORE THE STATE ETHICS COMMISSION
)	
IN THE MATTER OF:)	
COMPLAINT C2023-096)	
)	
State Ethics Commission,)	DECISION AND ORDER
Complainant.)	
)	
Christopher W. Cox,)	
Respondent.)	
_____)	

This matter comes before the State Ethics Commission (Commission) by way of a complaint filed on July 26, 2023. Pursuant to Section 8-13-320(10)(i) of the South Carolina Ethics, Government Accountability, and Campaign Reform Act of 1991 (Ethics Act), the Commission reviewed the above-captioned complaint against Christopher W. Cox (Respondent) and probable cause was found to warrant an evidentiary hearing. Present at the hearing on April 18, 2024, were Commissioners Scott E. Frick, AJ Holloway, and F. Xavier Starkes, Hearing Chair. Respondent was duly notified but did not appear. Complainant was represented by Courtney Laster. The following charges were considered:

COUNT ONE
FAILURE TO FILE A PRE-ELECTION CAMPAIGN DISCLOSURE REPORT
SECTION 8-13-1308(A), S.C. CODE ANN., 1976, AS AMENDED

That Christopher W. Cox, Town of Troy Councilmember, did in Richland County, fail to file a 2022 Pre-Election Campaign Disclosure Report [CDR], in violation of Section 8-13-1308(A).

COUNT TWO
FAILURE TO FILE STATEMENT OF ECONOMIC INTERESTS
SECTION 8-13-1140, S.C. CODE ANN., 1976, AS AMENDED

That Christopher W. Cox, Town of Troy Councilmember, did in Richland County, fail to file a 2020 Statement of Economic Interests (SEI), in violation of Section 8-13-1140.

COUNT THREE
FAILURE TO FILE STATEMENT OF ECONOMIC INTERESTS
SECTION 8-13-1140, S.C. CODE ANN., 1976, AS AMENDED

That Christopher W. Cox, Town of Troy Councilmember, did in Richland County, fail to file

a 2023 SEI, in violation of Section 8-13-1140.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Having carefully reviewed the evidence presented, the Commission finds as fact:

1. At all relevant times, Respondent has served on Troy Town Council. Respondent's most recent election was a November 8, 2022 election.
2. Respondent failed to file a SEI on or before March 30, 2020.
3. Respondent failed to file a 2022 Pre-Election CDR between October 19 and October 24, 2022.
4. In a November 4, 2022 certified letter, the Commission notified Respondent of his failure to timely file a 2022 Pre-Election CDR and 2020 SEI.
5. According to the United States Postal Service, the certified letter was delivered to Respondent's address of record on November 9, 2022. However, during the Commission investigation, Respondent disputed receiving this letter.
6. Respondent failed to file a SEI on or before March 30, 2023.
7. The Complaint was filed on July 26, 2023 and mailed to the Respondent via certified mail. Respondent signed for the Complaint on July 28, 2023. The Complaint notified Respondent of his failure to timely file a 2023 SEI and attached the Commission's November 4, 2022 correspondence. Respondent acknowledged receipt of the Complaint during the Commission's investigation.
8. Respondent filed his 2023 SEI on August 10, 2023.
9. The Commission investigation revealed no evidence that Respondent raised or spent any money in conjunction with his 2022 election.
10. As of the date of the hearing, Respondent had not filed a 2020 SEI or a 2022 Pre-Election CDR.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Based upon the Findings of Fact, the Commission concludes, as a matter of law:

1. At all times relevant, Respondent was a "candidate" pursuant to Section 8-13-1300(4) and a "public

official” pursuant to Section 8-13-100(27). Therefore, the Commission has personal and subject matter jurisdiction.

2. Section 8-13-1308(A) provides, in relevant part:

... a candidate who does not receive or expend campaign contributions totaling an accumulated aggregate of five hundred dollars or more must file an initial certified campaign report fifteen days before an election.

3. Section 8-13-1140 provides, in relevant part:

A person required to file a [SEI] under this chapter annually shall file ... an updated statement for the previous calendar year, no later than noon on March 30 ...

4. Section 8-13-1510(A) provides, in relevant part:

... a person required to file a report or statement under this chapter who files a late statement or report ... must be assessed a civil penalty as follows: (1) a fine of one hundred dollars if the statement or report is not filed within five days after the established deadline provided by law in this chapter; and (2) after notice has been given by certified or registered mail that a required statement or report has not been filed, a fine of ten dollars per calendar day for the first ten days after notice has been given, and one hundred dollars for each additional calendar day in which the required statement or report is not filed, not exceeding five thousand dollars.

5. Section 8-13-130 allows the Commission to “levy an enforcement or administrative fee on a person who is in violation” of the Ethics Act.

DECISION

NOW, THEREFORE, based on the foregoing Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, the Panel has determined, based on a preponderance of evidence, that Respondent Christopher W. Cox is in violation of one (1) count of 8-13-1308(A) for failing to file a 2022 Pre-Election CDR between October 19, 2022 and October 24, 2022; and two (2) counts of 8-13-1140 for failing to timely file 2020 and 2023 SEIs.

THEREFORE, Respondent is hereby Publicly Reprimanded and assessed a late-filing penalty of \$10,120.00 (\$5,000.00 for the 2022 Pre-Election CDR, \$5,000.00 for the 2020 SEI, and \$120.00

for the 2023 SEI)¹, and an administrative fee of \$1,000.00, for a total of \$11,120.00.

FURTHER, pursuant to Section 8-13-320 of the Ethics Act, if the \$11,120.00 is not paid within sixty (60) days from Respondent's receipt of this Order, a judgment in the amount of \$11,120.00 shall be entered against Respondent. In the event of a failure to pay, upon the Commission's filing of said Judgment with the Clerk of Court's Office in the County of Respondent's last known residence, the Clerk of Court shall enter this Order in the amount of \$11,120.00, less any money paid, in its Judgment Rolls, without cost to the Commission.

FINALLY, Respondent Christopher W. Cox has ten (10) days from receipt of this Order to appeal this Decision and Order to the full Commission.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED THIS 30th DAY OF April 2024.

STATE ETHICS COMMISSION


F. XAVIER STARKES, HEARING CHAIR

Columbia, South Carolina

¹ Pursuant to Section 8-13-1510, late-filing penalties begin to accrue following the receipt of certified notice of Respondent's failure to file. The Panel hereby declares July 28, 2023 as the date Respondent received certified notice of his failure to file the 2022 Pre-Election CDR, the 2020 SEI, and the 2023 SEI. Because Respondent filed his 2023 SEI on August 10, 2023, his late-filing penalties with regard to that report are limited to \$120.00. Respondent has accrued the maximum late-filing penalty of \$5,000.00 with regard to the 2022 Pre-Election CDR and the 2020 SEI.