

Who is a Government Lawyer's Client -- California Public Utilities Commission (PUC) General Counsel Lindh Has a Say

Article By:

Corporate Services

Government lawyer legal ethics are quite interesting to me. Several years ago, I had the great privilege of being retained by the Missouri Public Service Commission to prepare ethics rules for the PSC. Ultimately part of this work became the foundation for the PSC's rules limiting ex parte communications with Commissioners, now codified as [4 Mo. Code State Reg. 240-4.020](#).

Also, recently I have been asked to do several presentations on "Who is the client?" for government lawyers. While this topic may sound dry, it can be quite compelling -- particularly for government lawyers.

It was with great interest then, that I heard about and read the apparently [controversial](#) June 17, 2013, [speech](#) of Frank Lindh, General Counsel of the California Public Utilities Commission. Mr. Lindh offers a hypothetical where a PUC lawyer representing a statutorily-created ratepayer advocacy group disagrees with the head of the ratepayer advocacy group, and discusses what the lawyer's obligations are. It is quite an interesting discussion, and I strongly recommend those interested in government lawyer ethics review it.

Of course, one could also argue that Lindh assumes a key issue, that the head of the group is the "client" of the lawyer -- and not the ratepayers themselves

© Copyright 2025 Armstrong Teasdale LLP. All rights reserved

National Law Review, Volume III, Number 171

Source URL: <https://natlawreview.com/article/who-government-lawyer-s-client-california-public-utilities-commission-puc-general-co>