

Legislative Ethics Board

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BOARD MEETING – AUGUST 19, 2014

SENATE HEARING ROOM 3 – JOHN A. CHERBERG BUILDING

12 PM

Discussion of gifts of meals from lobbyists

The Board's third public hearing on free meals is scheduled for this date, probably the first order of public business. Interested persons are encouraged to attend. Following is a rough draft, for discussion purposes, of a potential rule which addresses this subject.

Rule Number 5 – Infrequent Meals - **DRAFT**

Introduction

A legislator may accept gifts of food and beverages on infrequent occasions in the ordinary course of meals where attendance by the legislator is related to the performance of official duties – RCW 42.52.150(5).

Scope of Rule

This rule is limited to food and beverage paid for by a registered lobbyist or lobbyist employer on behalf of a legislator. The rule does not pertain to sections of the Ethics Act which permit complimentary food and beverage in other circumstances.

Definitions

"Infrequent occasions" means two meals per calendar year (or) three meals in even-numbered years and five meals in odd-numbered years (or) twelve meals per calendar year (or) sixteen meals per calendar year with a maximum of four meals per quarter (or) fifty two meals per calendar year with a maximum of one meal per week.

In "the ordinary course of meals" means breakfast, lunch or dinner, regardless of cost (or over a certain amount, such as \$5.00 or \$25.00). A qualifying meal occurs when the guest would normally be expected to sit down and eat, such as in a restaurant or a private residence as opposed to a legislative reception.

It is presumed that sit down meals, whether breakfast, lunch or dinner, include both food and beverage and therefore they are to be counted against the maximum number of meals allowed.

"Attendance related to the performance of official duties" means that at least some of the discussion during the meal has to involve legislative business.

Reporting

Under discussion.