



NEWS RELEASE

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The New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC) has taken a major step forward in its ongoing effort to enable electronic filing of reports by the regulated community.

New Jersey Governmental Affairs Agents, more commonly called lobbyists, and their clients now can file annual reports via the Internet. Those reports, which detail activity for 2011, are due February 15, 2012.

"Initially, ELEC will not require electronic filing," said Jeff Brindle, ELEC's Executive Director. "We do hope to begin mandatory filing next year."

Carol Neiman, ELEC's Director of Information Technology, said the computer software being used to permit electronic filing has been thoroughly tested.

"We are excited to now release the program and have the lobbying community file its annual reports electronically," said Neiman.

"I want to thank my staff for its hard work in reprogramming ELEC's lobbyist system. This was one of our long-term goals for upgrading the agency's digital operations," Neiman said.

The new e-filing program will enable about 1,000 lobbyists to file their annual reports, which contain information on clients, fees, communication expenses and other details. It also is now possible to submit electronic reports filed by groups that undertake grassroots lobbying campaigns directed at the general public.

Neiman said lobbyists who file electronically will save time by using the online forms. For instance, the e-documents will automatically total fees listed for individual clients, she said. Lobbyists also will be able to save the forms for reuse in future years, and simply revise them to reflect changes, Neiman said.

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“The form was streamlined. It will perform all calculations. You can refresh the document with new information or change old information,” she said.

Brindle said agency officials are glad to provide the enhanced service for lobbyists and the public.

“Candidates for governor, legislators who spend more than \$100,000, some public contractors already are subject to mandatory e-filing, while many candidates do so voluntarily,” said Brindle. “This is part of the Commission’s efforts to deliver excellent services to the people of New Jersey.”

He added that the agency eventually hopes to enable electronic filing of reports of lobbying activity filed each quarter, Notices of Representation and Notices of Termination.

“However, before we take on another electronic filing initiative, improvements to our legacy programs are needed to protect them from becoming obsolete,” he said. “And, of course, all improvements to our system depend on State budget conditions.”

“As soon as possible, however, we do hope to allow lobbyists to electronically file their other reports,” he said.

ELEC will offer five training sessions to help lobbyists or their clients learn about the new program, according to Compliance Director Amy Davis and Lobbying Director Linda White.

Those sessions will be held in ELEC’s eighth floor conference room at 10:00 a.m. on January 5, 13, 25 and on February 2 and 7, she said. Interested individuals should submit a registration form.

Instructions also are available on ELEC’s website at www.elec.state.nj.us. ELEC staff are available by telephone to answer questions (609)-292-8700 or 1-(888) 313-ELEC (3532), Davis said.

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