

ETHICS PROGRAM INSPECTION REPORT

Agency: Marine Mammal Commission

Report No.: 23-141

Date: February 17, 2023

Period Covered by Review: January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021

**UNITED STATES OFFICE OF
GOVERNMENT ETHICS**Preventing Conflicts of Interest
in the Executive Branch

1.0	AGENCY DATA		
	EMPLOYEES		
1.1	Number of full-time agency employees.		13
1.2	Number of Presidentially appointed, Senate-confirmed (PAS) public financial disclosure reports required to be filed.		0
1.3	Number of non-PAS public financial disclosure reports required to be filed.		2
1.4	Number of confidential financial disclosure reports required to be filed.		6
	ETHICS PROGRAM		
1.5	Title of Designated Agency Ethics Official (DAEO).		General Counsel
1.6	Grade level of DAEO.		GS-15
1.7	Title of Alternate DAEO (ADAEO).		Executive Director
1.8	Grade level of ADAEO.		Administratively Determined
1.9	Title of the primary, day-to-day ethics program administrator.		General Counsel
1.10	Grade level of the primary, day-to-day ethics program administrator.		GS-15
1.11	Current number of full-time ethics officials.		0
1.12	Current number of part-time ethics officials.		2
1.13	Number of reporting levels between the DAEO and the agency head.		1
	COMMENTS		
	<p>The Marine Mammal Commission is governed by three Commissioners who serve as Special Government Employees (SGE). The Commissioners are assisted in their work by a nine-member Committee of Scientific Advisors on Marine Mammals who also serve as SGEs.</p> <p>(1.2 – 1.4) Filing data for SGES is located in section 10 of this report, and not included here. One PAS SGE filed a public report, one non-PAS SGES filed a public report, and 10 non-PAS SGEs filed confidential reports during the period covered by this inspection, as indicated below.</p>		

2.0	LEADERSHIP			
	COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS	Yes	No	N/A
2.1	OGE has received an up-to-date designation from the agency head naming the DAEO. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2638.107(a).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.2	OGE has received an up-to-date designation from the agency head naming the ADAEO. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2638.107(a).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	COMMENTS			
	None.			

3.0	PUBLIC FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE (OGE Form 278e, OGE Form 278-T)			
	COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS	Yes	No	N/A
	The agency has written policies and procedures in place governing: <i>See</i> 5 U.S.C. app. IV, § 402(d)(1).			
3.1	• Collection of public financial disclosure reports.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.2	• Review/evaluation of public financial disclosure reports.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.3	• Public availability of public financial disclosure reports.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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3.4	The agency can demonstrate that late filing fees are collected or, where appropriate, waivers are issued when public filers do not timely file financial disclosure reports.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3.5	Public financial disclosure reports are securely maintained. <i>See</i> OGE/GOVT-1.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.6	Public financial disclosure reports are retained in accordance with the retention requirements. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2634.603(g)(1).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.7	There is reasonable assurance that the lead human resources official or designee promptly (no later than 15 days after appointment) notifies the DAEO of all appointments to positions that require incumbents to file public financial disclosure reports. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2638.105(a)(1).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.8	There is reasonable assurance that the lead human resources official or designee promptly (no later than 15 days after termination) notified the DAEO of terminations of employees in positions that require incumbents to file public financial disclosure reports. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2638.105(a)(2).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DATA ANALYSIS		%		
3.9	Percentage of sampled non-PAS new entrant reports filed timely. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2634.201(b).	N/A		
3.10	Percentage of sampled non-PAS annual reports filed timely. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2634.201(a).	100%		
3.11	Percentage of sampled non-PAS termination reports filed timely. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2634.201(e).	N/A		
3.12	Percentage of sampled non-PAS public financial disclosure reports reviewed within 60 days of receipt. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2634.605(a).	100%		
3.13	Percentage of sampled non-PAS public financial disclosure reports certified within 60 days of receipt. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2634.605(a).	100%		
3.14	Percentage of sampled PAS annual reports filed timely. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2634.201(a).	N/A		
3.15	Percentage of sampled PAS termination reports filed timely. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2634.201(e).	N/A		
3.16	Percentage of sampled PAS annual and termination reports reviewed within 60 days of receipt. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2634.605(a).	N/A		
3.17	Percentage of sampled PAS annual and termination reports certified within 60 days of receipt. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2634.605(a).	N/A		
COMMENTS				
	(3.4) No filers were subject to the late filing fee during the period covered by the inspection. (3.9, 3.11) No new entrant or termination reports were required to be filed during the period covered by the inspection. (3.14 – 3.17) MMC has no PAS officials.			

4.0 CONFIDENTIAL FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE

COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS		Yes	No	N/A
The agency has written policies and procedures in place governing: <i>See</i> 5 U.S.C app. IV, § 402(d)(1).				
4.1	• Collection of confidential financial disclosure reports.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.2	• Review/evaluation of confidential financial disclosure reports.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.3	Confidential financial disclosure reports are securely maintained. <i>See</i> OGE/GOVT-2.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.4	Confidential financial disclosure reports are retained in accordance with the retention requirements. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2634.604.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.5	The agency's OGE-approved alternative confidential financial disclosure system complies with plans approved by OGE. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2634.905(a).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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4.6	There is reasonable assurance that the lead human resources official or designee promptly (no later than 15 days after appointment) notifies the DAEO of all appointments to positions that require incumbents to file confidential financial disclosure reports. See 5 C.F.R. § 2638.105(a)(1).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	DATA ANALYSIS	%		
4.7	Percentage of sampled confidential new entrant reports filed timely. See 5 C.F.R. § 2634.903(b).	0%		
4.8	Percentage of sampled confidential annual reports filed timely. See 5 C.F.R. § 2634.903(a).	100%		
4.9	Percentage of sampled reports reviewed within 60 days of receipt. See 5 C.F.R. § 2634.605(a).	100%		
4.10	Percentage of sampled confidential financial disclosure reports certified within 60 days of receipt. See 5 C.F.R. §§ 2634.605(a) and 2634.909(a).	100%		
	COMMENTS			
	(4.4) Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, MMC ethics officials have not had access to the confidential reports that were filed prior to pandemic using paper forms, some of which now exceed the retention period. MMC acknowledges the requirement to purge all reports that exceed the six-year retention period, and will do so when circumstances permit. (4.5) MMC does not have an OGE-approved alternative confidential financial disclosure system. (4.7) One confidential new entrant report was filed during the period under review. It was filed 143 days late.			

5.0	NOTICES TO PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYEES			
	COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS	Yes	No	N/A
	Written offers of employment for positions covered by the Standards of Conduct provide: <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2638.303.			
5.1	• A statement regarding the agency's commitment to government ethics.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.2	• Notice that the individual will be subject to the Standards of Conduct and the criminal conflict of interest statutes as an employee.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.3	• Contact information for an appropriate agency ethics office or an explanation of how to obtain additional information on applicable ethics requirements.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.4	• Where applicable, notice of the time frame for completing initial ethics training.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.5	• Where applicable, a statement regarding financial disclosure requirements and an explanation that new entrant reports must be filed within 30 days of appointment.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.6	The agency has established written procedures for issuing the notice to prospective employees. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2638.303(c).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.7	The agency's written procedures are reviewed by the DAEO each year. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2638.303(c).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.8	The agency can demonstrate that there is an effective process for ensuring all covered employees receive the required information with their written offer of employment. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2638.303.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
COMMENTS				
None.				

6.0	NOTICES TO NEW SUPERVISORS			
	COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS	Yes	No	N/A
	The agency must provide each employee upon initial appointment to a supervisory position with: <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2638.306.			
6.1	• Contact information for the agency's ethics office.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.2	• The text of 5 C.F.R. § 2638.103.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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6.3	• A copy of, a hyperlink to, or the address of a Web site containing the Principles of Ethical Conduct.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.4	• Other information the DAEO deems necessary.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.5	The agency has established written procedures for supervisory ethics notices. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2638.306(d).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.6	The agency's written procedures are reviewed by the DAEO each year. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2638.306(d).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.7	The agency can demonstrate that there is an effective process for ensuring that new supervisors receive the required information within one year of appointment. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2638.306(b).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
COMMENTS				
MMC has not hired or promoted an employee into a supervisory position since 2016, before the requirement to issue supervisory notices took effect. Although MMC has never had to issue a supervisory notice, the procedure in place provides reasonable assurance that new supervisors will receive required notices when necessary.				

7.0	INITIAL ETHICS TRAINING			
	COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS	Yes	No	N/A
	Each new employee of the agency subject to the Standards of Conduct must complete initial ethics training. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2638.304.			
7.1	The training presentation(s) addressed concepts related to conflicts of interest, impartiality, misuse of position and gifts. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2638.304(e)(1).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.2	The agency provided new employees with either the following written materials or written instruction for accessing them: The summary of the Standards of Conduct distributed by the Office of Government Ethics or an equivalent summary prepared by the agency; provisions of any supplemental agency regulation that the DAEO determines to be relevant or a summary of those provisions; such other written materials as the DAEO determines should be included; instructions for contacting the agency’s ethics officials. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2638.304(e)(2).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.3	The agency has established written procedures for initial ethics training. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2638.304(f).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.4	The agency’s written procedures are reviewed by the DAEO each year. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2638.304(f).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	DATA ANALYSIS	%		
7.5	Percentage of new employees who received initial ethics training. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2638.304.	N/A		
7.6	Percentage of new employees who received initial ethics training within three months of appointment. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. § 2638.304(b).	N/A		
	COMMENTS			
	(7.5, 7.6) MMC did not hire any new employees in 2021. The last new employee started work at MMC on November 22, 2020 and received live initial ethics that met requirements within three months of their appointment.			

8.0	ANNUAL ETHICS TRAINING			
	COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS	Yes	No	N/A
	Each calendar year, public filers, confidential filers, and certain other employees must complete ethics training which meets specified requirements. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. §§ 2638.307 and 2638.308.			
8.1	The training presentation(s) addressed concepts related to financial conflicts of interest, impartiality, misuse of position and gifts. <i>See</i> 5 C.F.R. §§ 2638.307(e)(1) and 2638.308(f)(1).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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8.2	The agency provided employees with either the following written materials or written instruction for accessing them: The summary of the Standards of Conduct distributed by the Office of Government Ethics or an equivalent summary prepared by the agency; provisions of any supplemental agency regulation that the DAEO determines to be relevant or a summary of those provisions; such other written materials as the DAEO determines should be included; instructions for contacting the agency's ethics officials. <i>See 5 C.F.R. § 2638.304(e)(2).</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
8.3	The agency's annual ethics training complies with the formatting requirements for public filers, confidential filers, and certain other employees. <i>See 5 C.F.R. §§ 2638.307(d) and 2638.308(e).</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
8.4	The agency's program for annual ethics training complies with the tracking requirements for public filers, confidential filers, and certain other employees. <i>See 5 C.F.R. §§ 2638.307(f) and 2638.308(g).</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
8.5	The agency can demonstrate it has an effective process for ensuring covered public filers, other than those whose pay is set at Level I or Level II of the Executive Schedule, complete live annual ethics training at least once every two years. <i>See 5 C.F.R. § 2638.308(e)(2).</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
DATA ANALYSIS		Training Format				
		Live	Interactive			
	Percentage of public filers who completed annual ethics training before the end of the calendar year. <i>See 5 C.F.R. § 2638.308(a).</i>					
8.6	• Executive Schedule Level I and Level II. <i>See 5 C.F.R. § 2638.308(e)(1).</i>	N/A	N/A			
8.7	• Other PAS and Equivalent. <i>See 5 C.F.R. § 2638.308(e)(2).</i>	0%	100%			
8.8	• SES and Equivalent. <i>See 5 C.F.R. § 2638.308(e)(3).</i>	0%	100%			
	Percentage of confidential filers and certain other employees who completed annual ethics training before the end of the calendar year. <i>See 5 C.F.R. § 2638.307(a)(d).</i>					
8.9	• Employees required to file an annual confidential financial disclosure report. <i>See 5 C.F.R. § 2638.307(a)(1).</i>	0%	83%			
8.10	• Employees appointed by the President. <i>See 5 C.F.R. § 2638.307(a)(2).</i>	N/A	N/A			
8.11	• Employees of the Executive Office of the President. <i>See 5 C.F.R. § 2638.307(a)(2).</i>	N/A	N/A			
8.12	• Contracting officers described in 41 U.S.C. § 2101. <i>See 5 C.F.R. § 2638.307(a)(3).</i>	N/A	N/A			
8.13	• Other employees designated by the head of the agency. <i>See 5 C.F.R. § 2638.307(a)(4).</i>	N/A	N/A			
COMMENTS						
	(8.5, 8.6, 8.10 – 8.13) MMC has no employees in these categories. (8.9) Five out of six confidential filers received interactive training. The remaining filer received electronic annual training materials but did not receive a training presentation that qualified as live or interactive.					

9.0 ETHICS ADVICE AND COUNSELING

	COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENT	Yes	No	N/A
9.1	Based on a sample collected by OGE, guidance provided by agency ethics officials to employees appears to be consistent with applicable laws and regulations. <i>See 5 C.F.R. § 2638.104(c)(4).</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	COMMENTS			
	None.			

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10.1	Number of SGEs serving on Advisory Committees and Boards.	12
	DATA ANALYSIS	%
10.2	Percentage of sampled confidential new entrant reports filed timely. <i>See 5 C.F.R. § 2634.903(b).</i>	80%
10.3	Percentage of sampled reports reviewed within 60 days of receipt but not later than the SGE's first meeting. <i>See 5 C.F.R. § 2634.605(a).</i>	90%
10.4	Percentage of sampled reports certified within 60 days of receipt. <i>See 5 C.F.R. § 2634.605(a).</i>	90%

Ethics Training

	COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS	Yes	No	N/A
	Required ethics training must be provided to each SGE. <i>See 5 C.F.R. §§ 2638.304 and 2638.307.</i>			
10.5	The training presentation(s) addressed concepts related to conflicts of interest, impartiality, misuse of position and gifts. <i>See 5 C.F.R. § 2638.304(e)(1).</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.6	The agency provided employees with either the following written materials or written instruction for accessing them: The summary of the Standards of Conduct distributed by the Office of Government Ethics or an equivalent summary prepared by the agency; provisions of any supplemental agency regulation that the DAEO determines to be relevant or a summary of those provisions; such other written materials as the DAEO determines should be included; instructions for contacting the agency's ethics officials. <i>See 5 C.F.R. § 2638.304(e)(2).</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	DATA ANALYSIS	%		
10.7	Percentage of SGEs who received initial ethics training. <i>See 5 C.F.R. § 2638.304.</i>	N/A		
10.8	Percentage of SGEs who received initial ethics training timely. <i>See 5 C.F.R. § 2638.304(b)(2).</i>	N/A		
10.9	Percentage of SGEs who received annual ethics training. <i>See 5 C.F.R. § 2638.307(d)(2).</i>	100%		

COMMENTS

Note: Two SGEs were required to file public financial disclosure reports because they performed services for MMC on more than 60 days during a 365-day period. Their reports were filed, reviewed, and certified timely.

(10.2) One filer has yet to submit a report that was required to be filed in 2021.

(10.7, 10.8) MMC did not hire any new SGEs in 2021.

(10.9) For their 2021 ethics training, MMC SGEs received a copy of a PowerPoint presentation for review, and instructions to contact MMC's DAEO if they had any questions. While the PowerPoint addressed the required content, this training format did not meet the requirement for live or interactive training.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

#	Element	RECOMMENDATION	Compliance Due
1	4.7	<p>RECOMMENDATION: Ensure that confidential financial disclosure reports are submitted timely.</p> <p><u>AGENCY RESPONSE:</u> Beginning with the next reporting cycle for SGEs, the Commission will take steps to ensure that all confidential report filers meet the filing deadline. It further notes that the sampled year was anomalous in some respects. Given the Covid pandemic, it was the first year in which the Commission and Committee convened a virtual meeting in lieu of an in-person meeting, which was held with less advance notice and less time for filers to file reports before the first meeting (the filing deadline for SGE filers).</p>	
2	10.2	<p>RECOMMENDATION: Collect the one outstanding 2021 SGE confidential financial disclosure report.</p> <p>AGENCY RESPONSE: The Commission will renew its efforts to collect the outstanding report.</p>	
3	10.9	<p>RECOMMENDATION: Ensure that SGEs receive required annual or initial ethics training presentations that qualify as live or interactive.</p> <p>AGENCY RESPONSE: It is expected that the Commission will resume in-person meetings in 2023 or 2024 and, following its pre-pandemic tradition, provide live ethics training to all filers. Interactive training will be provided to those unable to attend the live training sessions.</p>	