

June 28, 2022

Hon. Victoria Gray, Q.C.,  
Conflict of Interest Commissioner  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor, 421 Menzies Street  
Victoria, British Columbia V8V 1X4

Dear Ms. Gray,

I am writing to you about an issue that has recently been brought to my attention concerning a potential conflict of interest on the part of the Minister of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship, Josie Osborne.

The Official Opposition has obtained information that shows the minister's spouse listed and sold a multi-million dollar property listed on Osborne's financial disclosure forms to MakeWay Charitable Society, formerly Tides Canada. Following MakeWay's \$2.3 million purchase, Osborne was lobbied by the society or their coalition members on 10 separate occasions between September 23, 2021, to May 16, 2022, according to the Lobbyist Registry. In April of this year, MakeWay was awarded a \$15 million stewardship for watershed health from Osborne's ministry.

Based on the records we have acquired, we know:

1. **August 2020:** [Local news reports](#) George Patterson, husband of Josie Osborne, lists their 12-acre Tofino property (1084 Pacific Rim Highway) for sale for \$3.75 million. [Real estate listings confirm.](#)
2. **October 2020:** Osborne is elected NDP MLA for Mid Island-Pacific Rim and sworn in as Minister of Municipal Affairs.
3. **June 2021:** [BC Lobbyists Report notes](#) "Nicola Hill, a consultant lobbyist with Earncliffe Strategy Group LLP, is lobbying public office holders at several public agencies on behalf of MakeWay Charitable Society, with respect to implementation of the Old Growth Strategy Report recommendations, changes to the Forest and Range Practices Act, and other forest policy and legislation changes to make forestry more sustainable in B.C."
4. **July 2021:** [BC Assessment values](#) the property at \$2.3 million.
5. **September 17, 2021:** [BC Assessment reports a sales price of \\$2,304,400](#) on September 17 (the only sale in the past three years).
6. **October 6, 2021:** Less than three weeks after the property sale, MakeWay lobbied Osborne regarding "Creation and Implementation of the Watershed Security Strategy and the Watershed Security Fund committed to in 2021 mandate letters." ([ORL #2892-13819](#), Oct. 6, 2021)
7. **February 2022:** Osborne becomes Minister of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship.
8. **March 2022:** According to local news, [the property was "transferred" to MakeWay Canada](#) in September 2021, as facilitated by the [IISAAK OLAM](#) Foundation.



9. **April 5, 2022:** [MakeWay buys Osborne and key ministry staff](#) breakfast to “share information about the new ministry, their priorities, and to speak with members of environmental community.” See also [here](#).
10. **April 21, 2022:** MakeWay website reports it will steward \$15 million for watershed health: “Today, the Province of BC [announced](#) it will provide \$30 million for partnerships that empower local leaders to secure a sustainable future for their watersheds and the communities that depend on them. Of this funding, MakeWay Foundation and [Watersheds BC](#) (a project on [MakeWay’s shared platform](#)) will steward \$15 million specifically to support Indigenous-led projects for watershed health.”
  - a. The [MakeWay website is clear](#) this is government money: “As part of Budget 2022, the Province of BC has invested \$30 million for partnerships that empower local communities to secure a sustainable future for their watersheds and the communities that depend on them. Watersheds BC and MakeWay are partnering under the Indigenous Watersheds Initiative to steward \$15 million of this funding specifically to support Indigenous-led initiatives that are advancing watershed health.”

The above timeline raises several concerns about Minister Osborne’s relationship with MakeWay Charitable Society and suggests a potential conflict of interest. The Official Opposition understandably has further questions on the matter, which we urge your office to investigate.

These questions include:

1. Did the purchase of the property play a role in the award of the \$15 million fund to MakeWay?
2. Did the Minister have any communication with MakeWay before, during, or after the sale of the property regarding the award of the Watershed Fund Stewardship?
3. What steps were taken to eliminate a real or perceived conflict of interest by the Minister?
4. How can the public trust that, after the sale had concluded, MakeWay did not leverage this purchase to gain influence with the Minister's Office?
5. Did the Minister exercise her duties knowing that in doing so there was the opportunity to further her private interest?
6. Is there a reasonable perception that the Minister's ability to exercise her duties must have been affected by her private interest?
7. Did the Minister, in exercising her duties, engage in activities that in any way constitute a contravention of the provisions of the Conflict of Interest Act?

British Columbians must be able to trust that elected officials are conducting their business in a manner free of conflict of interest or contravention of ethics, and we believe the information we have provided warrants further examination by your office. We must ensure the best interests of British Columbians are being served by their elected officials and that MLAs are performing their public duties in a manner not affected by their private interests.



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
*of* BRITISH COLUMBIA

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions about the information included in this letter.

Sincerely,

Lorne Doerkson  
MLA for Cariboo-Chilcotin  
Official Opposition Critic for Land, Water and Resource Stewardship