



Online Ethics Center
FOR ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE

Contribution to Public Works Promotion Committee (adapted from NSPE Case No. 78-4)

Year

1999

Description

This is an open-ended scenario for discussion based on a case from the NSPE Board of Ethical Review. A promotion committee is organized to finance a variety of public works projects by issuing bonds to the public. They don't know, however, if they should allow engineering firms to contribute funds to the promotion fund.

Body

A group of local business and community leaders organized a "Promotion Committee" in support of a favorable vote for a one million dollar bond issue to finance a variety of public projects. The projects to be financed by this bond issue would require extensive engineering and architectural services of substantial value to local engineering and architectural firms.

The promotion committee has approached local engineering firms as well as bankers, realtors, insurance companies, and other local businesses to solicit funds for the public education program in support of the bond issue.

The promotion committee approaches your engineering firm to solicit funds. On the one hand, you are aware that giving money will likely result in design commissions

for jobs arising from the public works program if the bond issue passes. But on the other hand, you and your firm support the public projects the bond is meant to support and believe you would be supportive whether or not you stood to gain anything from it.

What should you do?

[NSPE Code of Ethics](#) An earlier version may have been used in this case.

Notes

See the original NSPE case at: [Design Commissions and Fund Raising - Case No. 78-4](#)

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