



FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20463

December 6, 2021

Jonathan Berkon, Esq.
Andrea Levien, Esq.
10 G Street NE
Washington, DC 20002

Re: ADR 1035 (21L-43)
Ditch Fund and Jennifer May, Treasurer (C00688739)

Dear Mr. Berkon and Ms. Levien:

Enclosed is the signed copy of the Negotiated Settlement resolving the above-shown matter. The Negotiated Settlement was approved by the Commission on December 1, 2021 – the effective date of the agreement.

Note the specific time frames for compliance detailed in the agreement. Please forward to this office, a statement confirming Respondent's compliance with each term. The letter should note the dates on which Respondents satisfied each of the terms and contain the ADR case number. For your convenience, a compliance chart is attached.

Under the terms of the agreement, a civil penalty in the amount of \$2,750 is due on December 31, 2021. Kindly review the attached payment instructions for details on payment methods and the collection of unpaid debts.

As you are aware, the Negotiated Settlement will be made part of the record that is released to the public. The Commission will also place on the record copies of the complaint/referral, correspondence exchanged between your office and this office prior to our negotiations, and reports prepared for the Commission by this office to assist in its consideration of this matter. The Commission is obliged by Federal statute to place on the public record documents in closed enforcement and alternative dispute resolution cases; accordingly, copies of documents relative to this matter will be forwarded shortly to the FEC's Public Records Office.

This agreement resolves this matter. I appreciate your assistance in effectively resolving this matter and bringing the case to a mutually acceptable conclusion.

Sincerely,

FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION – ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION OFFICE
1050 FIRST STREET, N.E., WASHINGTON, D.C. 20463
TELEPHONE:
EMAIL: KROCHE@FEC.GOV

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'KJ Roche', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Krista J. Roche
Director
Alternative Dispute Resolution Office

Enc: Payment Instructions
Compliance Chart
Negotiated Settlement

ADRO Civil Penalty Payment Instructions

You may remit payment by credit card, debit card, or ACH withdrawal from your bank account through Pay.gov, the federal government's secure portal for online collections. Visit www.fec.gov/adrpayment to be directed to Pay.gov's FEC ADR Payment form.

Unpaid Civil Penalties

Unpaid civil money penalties will be subject to the Debt Collection Act of 1982 ("DCA") as amended by the Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996 ("DCIA"), 31 U.S.C. § 3701 et seq. If you do not pay this debt within 30 days (or file a written petition to a federal district court - see below), the Commission will transfer the debt to the U.S. Department of the Treasury ("Treasury") for collection. Within 5 days of the transfer to Treasury, Treasury will contact you to request payment. Treasury currently charges a fee of 30% of the civil money penalty amount for its collection services. If the age of the debt is greater than or equal to two years old, Treasury will charge a fee of 32% of the civil money penalty amount for its collection services. The fee will be added to the amount of the civil money penalty that you owe. Should Treasury's attempts fail, Treasury will refer the debt to a private collection agency ("PCA"). If the debt remains unpaid, Treasury may recommend that the Commission refer the matter to the Department of Justice for litigation.

Actions which may be taken to enforce recovery of a delinquent debt by Treasury may also include: (1) offset of any payments, which the debtor is due, including tax refunds and salary; (2) referral of the debt to agency counsel for litigation; (3) reporting of the debt to a credit bureau; (4) administrative wage garnishment; and (5) reporting of the debt, if discharged, to the IRS as potential taxable income. In addition, under the provisions of DCIA and other statutes applicable to the FEC, the debtor may be subject to the assessment of other statutory interest, penalties, and administrative costs.

In accordance with the DCIA, at your request, the agency will offer you the opportunity to inspect and copy records relating to the debt, the opportunity for a review of the debt, and the opportunity to enter into a written repayment agreement.

ADR 1035 Compliance Chart

Type

Attend FEC seminar

Date Due

Thu 12/1/2022



FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20463

Case Number: ADR 1035

Source: RAD 21L-43

Case Name: Ditch Fund

NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT

This matter was initiated by the Federal Election Commission (FEC or the Commission) pursuant to information ascertained in the normal course of carrying out its supervisory responsibilities. Following review of the matter, and in an effort to promote compliance with the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971, as amended, (FECA) and resolve this matter, the Commission entered into negotiations with Jonathan S. Berkon, Esq., representing Ditch Fund and Jennifer May, in the official capacity of Treasurer (the Committee or Respondents). It is understood that this agreement will have no precedential value relative to any other matters coming before the Commission.

Negotiations between the Commission and Respondents addressed the issues raised in this referral. The parties agree to resolve the matter according to the following terms:


1. The Commission entered into this agreement as part of its responsibility for administering the FECA, and in an effort to promote compliance on the part of Respondents. The Commission's use of alternative dispute resolution procedures (ADR) is guided by "The Administrative Dispute Resolution Act of 1996," 5 U.S.C. § 572 and is an extension of 52 U.S.C. § 30109.
2. Respondents voluntarily enter into this agreement with the Commission.
3. The Reports Analysis Division (RAD) referred Respondents for failing to timely file five (5) 48-Hour Reports totaling \$54,673.43 to support thirty-six (36) independent expenditures disclosed on the 2020 October Quarterly Report. These reports have been filed, albeit untimely.
4. A person, including a political committee, that makes or contracts to make independent expenditures aggregating \$10,000 or more at any time up to and including the 20th day before the date of an election shall file a report describing the expenditures within 48 hours. 52 U.S.C. § 30104(g)(2), 11 C.F.R. § 104.4(b)(2).
5. The Committee states that it inadvertently omitted \$54,673.43 worth of independent expenditures from its 48-Hour Reports in August and September 2020. The Committee states that these inadvertent omissions were caused by a technological issue with the Committee's filing software. Specifically, the Committee contends that its Treasurer input these expenditures into the program and had pre-set the program to compile reports for all independent expenditures in the affected race prior to the filing deadline. However, the program omitted certain expenditures from the reports it pulled. Because the amounts

missing from the affected reports were small relative to the total amounts being reported, the Committee states that its Treasurer did not realize that the expenditures at issue were missing from the reports. Now that the Committee is aware of this technological issue with its filing software, it states that it has added an additional check to its filing process, in which its Treasurer compares the independent expenditures for the relevant period listed in its filing software against the independent expenditures listed on the Committee's draft reports and updates the draft reports to include any missing entries.

6. Respondents, in an effort to avoid similar errors in the future, agree to: (a) certify that a representative of the Committee participated in an FEC conference, webinar, or other training program developed in consultation with the FEC's Information Division within twelve (12) months of the effective date of this agreement; and (b) pay a civil penalty of \$2,750 within thirty (30) days of the effective date of this agreement.
7. Respondents agree that all information provided to resolve this matter is true and accurate to the best of their knowledge and that they sign this agreement under penalty of perjury pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746.
8. The parties agree that if Respondents fail to comply with the terms of this settlement, the Commission may undertake civil action in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia to secure compliance. Unpaid civil money penalties are subject to the Debt Collection Act of 1982 as amended by the Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996 (DCIA), 31 U.S.C. § 3701 et seq. The Commission will transfer debt to the United States Department of the Treasury (Treasury) for collection.
9. This agreement shall become effective on the date signed by all parties and approved by the Commission. Respondents shall comply with the terms of this agreement as set out in paragraph 6 above, and shall certify compliance with the above settlement terms in writing to the Alternative Dispute Resolution Office on or before the date each term becomes due.
10. This Negotiated Settlement constitutes the entire agreement between the parties on ADR 1035 (RAD 21L-43), and resolves those issues identified in paragraph 3 above. No other statement, promise or agreement, either written or oral, made by either party, not included herein, shall be enforceable.

FOR THE COMMISSION:

Krista J. Roche, Director
Alternative Dispute Resolution Office



12/1/21

Date Signed

FOR THE RESPONDENTS:



Jonathan S. Berkon, Esq.
Representing Ditch Fund and Jennifer May,
Treasurer

11/12/2021

Date Signed