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# Whitmer Stocks Administration with Lobbyists, Raising Serious Concerns about Conflicts of Interest

*Seven of Governor's First Major Appointments Were Registered Lobbyists before Being Picked by Whitmer to Oversee State Offices, Departments*

**LANSING, MI, January 9, 2019** – Michigan Freedom Fund President Terri Reid today sounded the alarm over growing conflict of interest concerns swirling around the office of Governor Gretchen Whitmer, following the appointment of seven former lobbyists to oversee major state agencies and offices.

These former lobbyists were appointed by Whitmer to serve as the Governor's Chief Strategist, State Budget Director, Director of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Chief of Legislative Affairs, Public Affairs Director, Policy Director, and Director of the state Department of Natural Resources. The vast majority of these individuals were active as registered lobbyists as recently as November 2018.

Public watchdogs from both parties have publicly raised concerns following a report yesterday that an 8<sup>th</sup> appointment – Orlene Hawks, Whitmer's hand-picked director of the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) – is married to a prominent lobbyist with clients whose interests are often overseen by LARA.

"In just a few weeks' time, Gretchen Whitmer has constructed a massive pipeline from the lobby corps directly into her administration," said Terri Reid, President of the Michigan Freedom Fund. "These appointments raise serious questions about conflicts of interest and regular Michiganders' ability to get a fair shake from their state government. A number of the lobbyists picked by Governor Whitmer formerly served clients – or worked for firms serving clients – with interests that collide head on with their new government positions. Whitmer owes voters transparency about where these conflicts exist – all of them – and what her administration will do to eliminate them."

Lobbyists moved by Whitmer into senior roles in her administration include:

**Mark Burton - Chief Strategist**

Lobby ID#: 012354

Registrant's Name: MARK A BURTON

Lobby Type: Lobbyist Agent

Date Became Lobbyist/Agent: 02/05/2013

Date Terminated: 08/10/2017

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**Chris Kolb - State Budget Director**

Lobby ID#: 010855  
Registrant's Name: CHRIS KOLB  
Lobby Type: Lobbyist Agent  
Date Became Lobbyist/Agent: 01/02/2009 (\*ACTIVE)

**Liesl Clark – Director, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality**

Lobby ID#: 012562  
Registrant's Name: LIESL EICHLER CLARK  
Lobby Type: Lobbyist Agent  
Date Became Lobbyist/Agent: 11/01/2013  
Date Terminated: 11/15/2018

**Greg Bird – Chief of Legislative Affairs**

Lobby ID#: 010824  
Registrant's Name: GREGORY BIRD  
Lobby Type: Lobbyist Agent  
Date Became Lobbyist/Agent: 11/07/2008  
Date Terminated: 12/31/2018

**Jennifer Flood – Public Affairs Director**

Lobby ID#: 013404  
Registrant's Name: JENNIFER FLOOD  
Lobby Type: Lobbyist Agent  
Date Became Lobbyist/Agent: 05/09/2016  
Date Terminated: 12/21/2018

**Emily Laidlaw – Policy Director**

Lobby ID#: 012226  
Registrant's Name: EMILY LAIDLAW  
Lobby Type: Lobbyist Agent  
Date Became Lobbyist/Agent: 09/13/2012  
Date Terminated: 11/30/2018

**Daniel Eichinger – Director, Michigan Department of Natural Resources**

Lobby ID#: 012780  
Registrant's Name: DANIEL EICHINGER  
Lobby Type: Lobbyist Agent  
Date Became Lobbyist/Agent: 08/11/2014  
Date Terminated: 12/31/2018

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