

1 **BEFORE THE WASHINGTON STATE**
2 **EXECUTIVE ETHICS BOARD**

3 In the Matter of:

4 Patrick Depoe,

5 Respondent
6

EEB Case No. 2024-025

ORDER OF DEFAULT AND
FINAL ORDER

7
8 **I. PROCEDURAL HISTORY**

9 On May 7, 2024, the Executive Ethics Board (Board) received a complaint alleging that
10 Patrick Depoe, an employee of the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR),
11 may have violated the Ethics in Public Service Act. The complaint alleged that Patrick Depoe
12 violated RCW Chapter 42.52, by using public resources for a political campaign.

13 On September 15, 2025, notification of the Reasonable Cause Determination was deposited
14 in the United States mail to Patrick Depoe at their address on record, PO Box 326 Neah Bay, WA
15 98357. The first-class mailing was not returned by the USPS.

16 According to USPS, the certified letter was received and signed for on September 18, 2025.

17 Patrick Depoe has not responded to the Reasonable Cause Determination as of the date of
18 this Order.

19 **II. FINDINGS OF FACT**

20 1. According to the complaint, Patrick Depoe allegedly sent two emails from their
21 DNR email account related to their political campaign.

22 2. According to DNR, Patrick Depoe was hired on March 16, 2023 as the Director
23 of Tribal Relations. According to Patrick Depoe's job description, they were to advise the
24 Commissioner of Public Lands and agency staff on issues of interest to tribal sovereigns and
25 sovereignty. Additionally, they were responsible for overseeing the Deputy of Tribal Affairs and
26

1 Cultural Resource Specialist, ensuring effective leadership and coordination within the team.
2 Effective January 15, 2025, Patrick Depoe left their position with DNR.

3 3. Along with the complaint, Board staff were provided with the following two
4 emails in question, sent by Patrick Depoe¹:

5 **From:** Patrick Depoe

6 **Subject:** A Call to Action: National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered
7 Indigenous Women

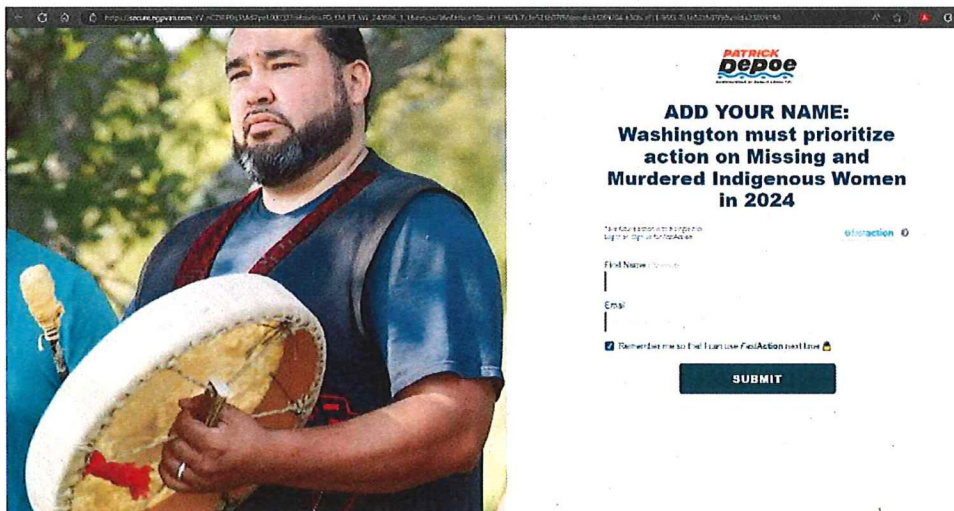
8 **Email #1:**

9 **Date:** Monday, May 6, 2024

10 *The body of the email stated, in part:*

11 *“As a leader in the Makah tribal nation and a candidate for Washington's Public
12 Lands Commissioner, I see this not only as a political issue but as a personal and
13 environmental justice imperative to do better in the years ahead. If you share my
14 concern, join me in sending a message that Washington must prioritize action on
15 MMIW by adding your name to our petition:*

16 *ADD YOUR NAME²”*



24
25 ¹ According to DNR IT, it appeared these emails were received by several hundred State employees.

26 ² The “add your name” was in a clickable box which would redirect users to the above screen capture of Patrick Depoe’s campaign website for Commissioner of Public Lands.

1 **Email #2:**

2 **From:** Patrick Depoe

3 **Subject:** why I need your support

4 **Date:** Tuesday, May 7, 2024

5 *The body of the email stated, in part:*

6 “It's filing week for candidates up and down the Washington state ballot.

7 **I'm honored to have the opportunity to run for Commissioner of Public Lands,
8 one of Washington's most important statewide offices.**

9 *The Commissioner of Public Lands protects everything great about our state, its lands,
10 and the people they sustain. It's an important role, and I'm asking for your support. Are
11 you with me?*

12 Here's *why* I'm running — and why I'm the most qualified candidate in this crucial
13 contest. I have a clear vision for the role of Commissioner of Public Lands.

14 *I've seen firsthand how public policy impacts our environment and livelihoods. As our
15 state moves towards a better future, we must bring new energy and creativity into using
16 —and sustaining—what nature provides us. We are in this together.”*

17 4. While the two emails were sent from “Patrick Depoe,” when Board staff clicked
18 on Patrick Depoe’s name, Outlook brought up the sender email of
19 “info@depoeforwashington.com.”

20 5. In DNR’s written response to Board staff provided by Katy Taylor, Chief
21 Operating Officer, it read, in part:

22 *“When I was notified that some employees had received an email from the
23 campaign, I contacted Patrick. He was aware and had already reached out to the
24 Public Disclosure Commission to let them know this had been sent inadvertently by
25 the mail service his campaign is using. Patrick informed me he had asked the service
26 to scrub the email list the service is using for his campaign and remove any with a
.gov address. Two days later, a second email was received by some staff. I contacted
Patrick again. He was surprised and said the service had been notified and all
should have been removed. Apparently, the second email was already in the queue
for transmittal and therefore was missed in the review by the service.”³*

³ No further emails were received by DNR employees.

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2 6. As part of this investigation, Board staff obtained and reviewed a copy of Patrick
3 Depoe’s DNR emails. Upon review, Board staff found no other emails related to their political
4 campaign. However, Board staff noted the following email of interest:

5 **From:** David Depoe

6 **To:** One DNR employee

7 **Date:** March 6, 2024

8 *Body of email was a forwarded email originally sent by Katy Taylor (COO), which read,
9 in part:*

10 Good morning,

11 As we enter into a significant election year, it’s crucial that, as state employees, we
12 understand and follow the rules for state employee involvement in election campaigns,
13 as well as the use of state resources and facilities for campaign purposes.

14 There are several guidelines around state employee involvement in election campaigns.
15 In summary: **A state employee may engage in political activity as long as it is on
16 their own time and not using state resources.**

17 7. According to Katy Taylor, they were unaware if Patrick Depoe authorized the
18 sending of the above emails. Board staff additionally inquired how Patrick Depoe’s campaign
19 obtained the state employee mailing list, to which Katy Taylor replied, “[m]y understanding is
20 that the campaign used a third party provider that many candidates use to send emails. From our
21 conversation, it seemed Patrick was unaware that the list included state email addresses.”

22 CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

23 1. The Board has jurisdiction to hear this matter pursuant to RCW 42.52.360(1),
24 which authorizes the Board to enforce the Ethics in Public Service Act, chapter 42.52 RCW,
25 with respect to employees in the executive branch of state government. The Board has
26 jurisdiction over Patrick Depoe, whose actions occurred while they were a state employee.

1 Based on the evidence reviewed, Patrick Depoe used state resources to support their candidacy
2 for office in violation of RCW 42.52.180.

3 2. RCW 42.52.180(1) – Use of public resources for political campaigns, which states,
4 in part:

5 No state officer or state employee may use or authorize the use
6 of facilities of an agency, directly or indirectly, for the purpose
7 of assisting a campaign for election of a person to an office or
8 for the promotion of or opposition to a ballot proposition.
9 Facilities of an agency include, but are not limited to, use of
10 stationary, postage, machines, and equipment, use of state
employees of the agency during working hours, vehicles,
office space, publications of the agency, and clientele lists of
persons served by the agency.

11 3. The Board is authorized to impose sanctions for violations to the Ethics Act
12 pursuant to RCW 42.52.360.

13 4. In determining the appropriateness of the civil penalty, the criteria in WAC 292-
14 120-030 have been reviewed.

15 **III. ORDER OF DEFAULT AND FINAL ORDER**

16 Based on the foregoing, the Board:

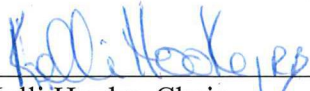
17 FINDS the Respondent, Patrick Depoe, failed to file a response and/or request a hearing
18 within 30 days after proper service of the Board's reasonable cause determination in this matter and
19 after proper service of notice of the right to request an adjudicative hearing.

20 CONCLUDES that the Respondent, Patrick Depoe, is in default under the provisions of
21 RCW 34.05.440(1) and WAC 292-100-060(3).

22 IT IS ORDERED that pursuant to RCW 34.05.440(1) and WAC 292-100-060(3) the Board
23 may proceed to resolve this case without further notice to, or hearing for the benefit of, Respondent
24 Patrick Depoe.

1 IT IS HEREBY FURTHER ORDERED Respondent Patrick Depoe is liable for and shall
2 pay a civil penalty of two thousand dollars (\$2,000). The payment shall be made to the Executive
3 Ethics Board within forty-five (45) days of this Order.

4 DATED this 14th day of November 2025.

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6 
Kelli Hooke, Chair


Cam Comfort, Member

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8 
Megan Abel, Vice Chair


David Hankins, Member

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10 
11 Mark Rapozo, Member

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13 **APPEAL RIGHTS**

14 **RECONSIDERATION OF FINAL ORDER – BOARD**

15 Any party may ask the Executive Ethics Board to reconsider a Final Order. The request
16 must be in writing and must include the specific grounds or reasons for the request. The request
17 must be delivered to Board office within 10 days after the postmark date of this order.

18 The Board is deemed to have denied the request for reconsideration if, within 20 days
19 from the date the request is filed, the Board does not either dispose of the petition or serve the
20 parties with written notice specifying the date by which it will act on the petition.
21 RCW 34.05.470.

22 The Respondent is not required to ask the Board to reconsider the Final Order before
23 seeking judicial review by a superior court. RCW 34.05.470.
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