

March 30, 2010

Michael Fulmes  
News Director  
Global Edmonton  
5325 Allard Way  
Edmonton, AB  
T6H 5B8

Dear Mr. Fulmes,

Your letter to Bart Johnson, Director of Communications at Alberta Finance and Enterprise, offering an explanation for Global Edmonton's breach of the Budget 2010 embargo, has been forwarded to me for consideration and decision.

To summarize the details of the breach, four "tweets" were broadcast from the Twitter account of Global Edmonton anchor Lynda Steele between 3:16 p.m. and 3:17 p.m. on Budget Day, Tuesday, February 9, 2010. Not only did this result in the distribution of specific budget information prior to the Minister of Finance and Enterprise commencing his budget address, which began at 3:20 p.m., it was the result of embargoed information being shared with Ms Steele, who was not a signatory to the embargo agreement.

A breach of an embargo of any kind is a breach of trust. That it has to do with subject matter that can have market implications makes it all the more serious a matter. The Government of Alberta's budget embargo rules for media are extremely permissive relative to those of the federal government and some other provinces. In exchange for this flexibility, government asks only that media agree to respect the rules of the embargo.

Global Edmonton breached that agreement. In light of the fact that this is the second budget embargo breach in three years by an Alberta media outlet, we must now consider more severe restrictions on the entire media corps for future budgets and similar events, including a strict lockup where electronic devices are removed.

We accept your explanation of the circumstances surrounding the breach, including your submission that the breach was not intentional, and we appreciate your taking full responsibility for it. We recognize that the Legislative Assembly had reconvened and accept that you heard incorrectly that the speech had started before you began sharing information with Ms Steele. However, as you point out in your letter, "the onus is on (Global) to know the rules and to follow them."

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While we will review the mechanics of future budget embargoes, it is imperative that Global Edmonton specifically be sanctioned for its breach of this embargo to ensure fairness to those media that did respect the agreement. Effective immediately, all Global Edmonton personnel will be denied access to any embargoed information or media relations event by the Alberta government until the end of the 2010 calendar year.

The Government of Alberta retains the right to revisit this decision should any additional information regarding the incident come to light.

Notwithstanding this issue and our need to address it, I do wish to note government's appreciation of Global Edmonton's commitment to covering provincial affairs. I look forward to continuing to work with you in the future.

Sincerely,

Lee Funke  
Managing Director

cc Brian Manning  
Deputy Minister, Executive Council  
Kim Trynacity  
President, Alberta Legislature Press Gallery

*Alberta* ■