



**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OFFICE OF THE ETHICS COMMISSIONER**

**REPORT OF
JEFFREY SCHNOOR, K.C.
ETHICS COMMISSIONER**

**Re: The Honourable Mike Moroz, Minister of Innovation and New Technology
and Member of the Legislative Assembly for River Heights**

July 16, 2025

I. Background

1. On May 27, 2025, Konrad Narth, the member of the Legislative Assembly for La Vérendrye, submitted a request that I conduct an inquiry into alleged breaches of *The Conflict of Interest (Members and Ministers) Act* (“the Act”) by the Honourable Mike Moroz, the member for River Heights and the Minister of Innovation and New Technology. The full text of MLA Narth’s request is set out in Appendix A of this report.

2. The request for an inquiry arises out of a tragic set of circumstances. According to a media report published on April 8, 2025, Dean Switzer suffered a heart attack on March 23, 2025 in his home just outside Fisher Branch, Manitoba. His family and friends tried repeatedly to call 911 emergency services but could not get through because of a service outage. Sadly, Mr. Switzer did not survive.

3. According to the media report, the phone service provider for Mr. Switzer’s family and friends was TELUS. Their inability to reach 911 emergency services was understandably concerning and became a matter of discussion in the media and in the Legislative Assembly. Minister Moroz took the lead in these discussions on behalf of the government.

4. The concerns raised by MLA Narth in his request for an inquiry come down to these allegations:

- Minister Moroz held shares in TELUS while dealing with this matter. MLA Narth alleges that this constituted a conflict of interest.
- MLA Narth alleges that Minister Moroz had confidential information about the investigation into the 911 service outage and, using this information, sold his shares in TELUS.
- MLA Narth alleges that Minister Moroz breached sections 2, 3 and 4 of the Act.

5. Section 46 of the Act provides:

Notice of inquiry

46 Before conducting an inquiry, the commissioner must give the member whose conduct is the subject of the inquiry reasonable notice.

6. I wrote to Minister Moroz on May 28, 2025 and provided him with the required notice. I asked him to provide me with detailed information about his shareholdings in TELUS and advised him that, if he wished, he could provide me with a written response to MLA Narth's allegations. Minister Moroz provided me with his response on June 10, 2025 and, at my request, provided further information on June 13, 2025. I questioned Minister Moroz under oath on June 25, 2025.

II. Facts

7. Based on the responses provided to me by Minister Moroz and my review of publicly available information, I make the following findings of fact:
- a. TELUS is a publicly traded corporation and provides cellphone service in Manitoba. Its cellphone services are regulated under federal jurisdiction by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC).
 - b. Minister Moroz first acquired shares in TELUS on April 5, 2021. At the relevant time, Minister Moroz owned 500 shares in TELUS.
 - c. As required by the Act, Minister Moroz included his shares in TELUS in his Disclosure of Assets, Liabilities and Sources of Income form. This information is available for public viewing on the Ethics Commissioner's website.
 - d. On April 3, 2025, a media outlet asked the provincial government for comment on a story it was working on respecting the death of Mr. Switzer and the 911 service

outage. Minister Moroz advises that this is when the provincial government first learned of this incident.

- e. On April 8, 2025, the media outlet published its story about the incident. The story identified TELUS as the service provider for the family and friends who were trying to reach 911 to assist Mr. Switzer.
- f. On the same day, April 8, 2025, TELUS wrote to the CRTC advising them of the service outage. It indicated that it provided 911 service through Bell Canada and said that it was working with Bell Canada to identify the cause of the service outage. The letter was posted to the CRTC's website.
- g. On April 9, 2025, Minister Moroz wrote to the President of TELUS, Darren Entwistle. The letter expressed the concern of the Manitoba government about the incident and a desire "to [work] with you on constructive solutions to prevent another tragedy of this nature."
- h. Mr. Entwistle replied to Minister Moroz on April 11, 2025. He advised that TELUS was working with Bell Canada to find the cause of the service outage. He said: "Once the review has been completed, we will apprise you of the results."
- i. On April 11, 2025, the CRTC wrote to TELUS. It acknowledged receipt of TELUS' letter of April 8, 2025. It asked for some revisions to that letter and asked TELUS to provide progress reports on the investigation into the cause of the 911 service outage. That letter was posted to the CRTC website.
- j. On April 14, 2025, the Manitoba government obtained the April 8, 2025 letter from TELUS to the CRTC from the CRTC's website.

k. TELUS wrote to the CRTC on April 16, April 25 and May 2, 2025. Each letter advised that the investigation into the 911 service outage was still ongoing. Each of these letters was posted to the CRTC website.

l. On May 7, 2025, Minister Moroz responded to two questions about this incident in the Legislative Assembly during Question Period. In his first response, he said:

As the Minister of Health and seniors rightly pointed out a moment ago, we are working very closely with communities, with health-care providers and with the federal government, of course, which has some responsibility in this area, to make sure that we improve the system as rapidly as we possibly can.

m. In his second response, he said:

We're very concerned about this issue, and as I just identified for the member opposite, it is, of course, at least partially federally organized. It's under the jurisdiction of the CRTC. We're working diligently with the federal government and with communities and with health-care providers to improve the system as quickly as possible.

n. On May 8, 2025, Minister Moroz sold his 500 shares in TELUS, receiving \$10,391.25. In doing so, he incurred a loss of \$1,591.75. As required by the Act, Minister Moroz filed an amendment to his Disclosure of Assets, Liabilities and Sources of Income form, disclosing the sale.

8. I find that the following occurred after the sale of Minister Moroz's shares in TELUS:

o. Minister Moroz answered questions about the 911 service outage in the Legislative Assembly on May 14, May 15, May 22 and May 26. As noted by MLA North in his request for an inquiry, Minister Moroz made the following statement in the Legislative Assembly on May 15, 2025:

We've reviewed the interim report from TELUS and the CRTC which confirms it was a TELUS outage that impacted 911 calls. We're meeting with TELUS later today to discuss both what went wrong and what steps are being taken to ensure it never happens again. [emphasis added]

- p. As indicated in his answer, Minister Moroz met with TELUS on May 15, 2025. There was no other communication from TELUS to Minister Moroz or the Manitoba government about this incident.
- q. On May 16, 2025, TELUS submitted a letter to the CRTC describing the outcome of its investigation into the cause of the service outage. The letter was posted to the CRTC website.

III. Analysis

9. In this part, I will consider the concerns raised by MLA Narth, including the sections of the Act that he identified (section 2, 3 and 4). I will then determine whether Minister Moroz breached the Act.

a. Ownership of shares

10. The Act contains no prohibition on members or Cabinet ministers owning shares in publicly traded corporations. The fact of such ownership does not, by itself, constitute a conflict of interest.

11. Accordingly, Minister Moroz was not in breach of the Act by owning shares in TELUS.

12. In order for a conflict of interest to exist or a breach of the Act to occur, a member must do more than simply own an asset. The next sections will discuss this.

b. Conflict of interest

13. Section 2 of the Act defines when a member is in a conflict of interest:

Conflict of interest

2 For the purpose of this Act, a member is in a conflict of interest when the member exercises an official power, duty or function that provides an opportunity to further their private interests or those of their family or to improperly further another person's private interests.

14. To summarize, for a member to be in a conflict of interest, the member must take a specific action in an official capacity and that action must provide an opportunity to further a private interest. If a member is in a conflict of interest, they must recuse themselves from discussions about the matter: section 16(1).

15. Minister Moroz wrote to TELUS on April 9, 2025 and answered questions about the 911 service outage in the Legislative Assembly on May 7. These were exercises of an official function.

16. The next questions then are whether Minister Moroz had a private interest and, if so, whether those exercises of an official function, taken while he owned shares in TELUS, provided an opportunity to further that private interest. In my view, the answer to both questions is no.

17. "Private interest" is defined by exclusion in section 1(1):

"private interest" **does not include** an interest in a decision or matter

- (a) that is of general application;
- (b) that affects a member as one of a broad class of persons; or
- (c) that concerns the remuneration, allowances or benefits of a member or of an officer or employee of the Assembly;

or an interest that is so remote or insignificant in its nature that it cannot reasonably be regarded as likely to influence the member. [emphasis added]

18. Minister Moroz's interest in TELUS, worth \$10,391.25 at the time of disposition, was very small. I appreciate that this is not a small amount of money for many people, but it must be viewed in the context of TELUS' overall valuation. According to online sources, TELUS has a market capitalization of over 33 billion dollars and an average of over 3.7 million shares are traded daily.

19. Minister Moroz's interest in TELUS was also clearly remote. TELUS is regulated by the federal government and not the provincial government.

20. In my view, therefore, Minister Moroz's interest in TELUS was so remote and insignificant that it cannot reasonably be regarded as likely to have influenced him. He therefore did not have a private interest within the meaning of the Act.

21. Even if it could be said that Minister Moroz did have a private interest, it is highly unlikely, and speculative at best, that Minister Moroz could affect the business of TELUS, let alone its share price, by writing a letter to TELUS or answering questions in the Legislative Assembly. It is difficult to imagine how these two actions could provide an opportunity to further the private interest of himself or any other person.

22. I therefore conclude that Minister Moroz did not have a private interest while owning shares in TELUS and he did not have an opportunity to further any private interest. Accordingly, Minister Moroz was not in a conflict of interest within the meaning of section 2 of the Act and was not required to recuse himself from discussions about this matter.

c. Making a decision while in a conflict of interest

23. MLA Narth alleges that Minister Moroz breached section 3 of the Act. Section 3 provides that a member may not make a decision while in a conflict of interest:

Decision-making

3 A member must not make a decision or participate in making a decision related to the exercise of an official power, duty or function if the member knows or reasonably should know that, in making the decision, the member would be in a conflict of interest.

24. As I have already found, Minister Moroz was not in a conflict of interest. Furthermore, there is no evidence that Minister Moroz made any decision in this matter. At most, he wrote to TELUS to express concern and ask for information; this cannot be characterized as a decision. Accordingly, Minister Moroz did not breach section 3 of the Act.

d. Confidential information

25. MLA Narth alleges that Minister Moroz breached section 4 of the Act. Section 4 prohibits the use of confidential information:

Insider information

4 A member must not use or communicate information that is obtained in their position as a member and that is not available to the public to further or seek to further the member's private interests or those of their family or to improperly further or seek to further another person's private interests.

26. According to MLA Narth, Minister Moroz acknowledged in the Legislative Assembly on May 15, 2025 “reviewing the interim report, a report that was only made available to the public later that week.” However, at that point, the only “interim report” was the letter from TELUS to the CRTC dated April 8, 2025 that was posted to the CRTC’s website and available to the public. Minister Moroz confirmed to me that this was the “interim report” that he was referring to and confirmed that he received no other information from TELUS.

27. There is no evidence that Minister Moroz had any confidential information that was not available to the public. On the contrary, his information about this matter appears to have come from media reports and publicly available documents on the CRTC’s website. Accordingly, Minister Moroz did not breach section 4 of the Act.

IV. Conclusion

28. For the reasons given above, I conclude that Minister Moroz has not breached *The Conflict of Interest (Members and Ministers) Act* as alleged by MLA Narth.

Jeffrey Schnoor, K.C.
Ethics Commissioner

Appendix A

Details submitted by MLA Narth in his Request for Inquiry

I write today to direct your attention to a matter of serious concern regarding the actions of Mike Moroz, MLA for River Heights and Minister of Innovation and New Technology. On May 19th, 2025 an updated Member's Disclosure Statement for the Minister was posted on the Ethics Commissioner Portal. This showed that on May 13th, the Minister sold his shares in Telus Corporation.

Firstly, the presence of these shares is concerning, as the NDP Government has made it evident that Mike Moroz was the Minister responsible for matters involving the telecoms. This was substantiated through a series of questions related to the failure of Telus when a 38 hour outage between March 22 and 24th. This meant some Manitobans could not connect with 911 services. Tragically, Dean Swiston suffered a heart attack in his home in the RM of Fisher during this outage, where the family was unable to contact life-saving emergency services.

In seeking answers for Dean's family, including the scope of the failure, it was revealed that it was not the Minister Responsible for the Emergency Management Organization who was addressing questions on this issue, but the Minister of Innovation and New Technology, Mr. Moroz. This means that the Kinew Government has knowingly placed a member with a financial interest in a telecom company in a position to receive inside information that could impact his investments. Such as the revelation that an investigation was ongoing into a system failure that endangered Manitobans.

On April 9th, 2025 Mr. Moroz sent a letter to Telus regarding the outage for March 22nd – 24th. This shows that he had access that was unavailable to the general public, with over a month of advance notice. On May 7th the Government was asked about issues with the rural 911 system in Question Period and Mr. Moroz refused to acknowledge his April 9th letter which bears his signature. He also did not acknowledge that he was aware it was an issue with any specific telecom. It was only after he had sold his shares on May 13th that Mr. Moroz was willing to identify Telus as having an involvement in the tragic outage of March 22nd – March 24th. By May 15th Mr. Moroz acknowledges reviewing the interim report, a report that was only made available to the public later that week.

The Act is incredibly clear, "a member is in a conflict of interest when the member exercises an official power, duty or function that provides an opportunity to further their private interests". Mr. Moroz had a private interest, he owned shares in Telus Corporation. He sold those shares while being informed of an internal investigation into a system failure that disrupted access to emergency services. On May 13th, 2025 the Minister was in possession of information not

available to the public and clearly made decisions regarding his investments in Telus Corporation taking that information into account.

Mr. Moroz's language before he sold his personal shares in Telus is distinctly different than his language and communication after that sale. The Minister responsible held personal stock in a single Telecom while accepting and reviewing confidential documentation of that telecom. He sold those shares before informing the public. This is a textbook example of making financial decisions related to information not available to the general public, and abusing access available solely as a result of his position as a Minister of the Crown.

Mr. Moroz should never have been the lead Minister on a matter in which he had a personal financial stake. He should not have had access to information unavailable to the general public. Above all else he should have made personal financial decisions based on this confidential information. This is clearly outlined in Sections 2, 3, and 4 of the Act. I ask that you investigate to get to the bottom of these serious concerns that a Minister of the Kinew government was making decisions related to his own financial interests.