



FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION
Washington, DC 20463

April 8, 2022

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL AND CERTIFIED MAIL
RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

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RE: MUR 7613

Dear Mses. Chlopak and Gonzalves-Brown:

This is in reference to the complaint you filed with the Federal Election Commission on May 22, 2019, concerning allegations that Zekelman Industries, Inc., Wheatland Tube, LLC, Barry Zekelman, and Roger Schagrin violated 52 U.S.C. § 30121(a)(1), a provision of the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971, as amended, and that America First Action, Inc. (“AFA”), and Jon Proch in his official capacity as Treasurer, violated 52 U.S.C. § 30121(a)(2) in connection with three contributions made by Wheatland Tube to AFA between April and October, 2018.

Based on that complaint, on July 29, 2021, the Commission found that there was reason to believe that Zekelman Industries, Wheatland Tube, and Barry Zekelman violated 52 U.S.C. § 30121(a)(1)(A). The Commission then instituted an investigation of this matter. Subsequently, the Commission on April 6, 2022, entered into a conciliation agreement with Zekelman Industries and Wheatland Tube and determined to take no further action concerning the remaining allegations and close the file.

Documents related to the case will be placed on the public record within 30 days. *See* Disclosure of Certain Documents in Enforcement and Other Matters, 81 Fed. Reg. 50,702 (Aug. 2, 2016).

The Factual and Legal Analysis, which explains the Commission’s findings, and a copy of the conciliation agreement are enclosed. If you have any questions, please contact Aaron Rabinowitz, the attorney assigned to this matter, at (202) 694-1476 or arabinowitz@fec.gov.

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Sincerely,

Lisa J. Stevenson
Acting General Counsel

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jin Lee".

By: Jin Lee
Acting Assistant General Counsel

Enclosures
Factual and Legal Analysis
Conciliation Agreement

FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION**FACTUAL AND LEGAL ANALYSIS**

RESPONDENTS: Zekelman Industries, Inc.
Wheatland Tube, LLC
Barry Zekelman

MUR 7613

I. INTRODUCTION

The Complaint alleges that Wheatland Tube, LLC (“Wheatland Tube”), a U.S.-based subsidiary of another U.S. company, Zekelman Industries, Inc., made \$1.75 million in prohibited foreign national contributions to America First Action, Inc., and Jon Proch in his official capacity as Treasurer (“AFA”) during the 2018 election cycle.¹ The Complaint asserts that foreign national Barry Zekelman, the chief executive officer and executive chairman of Zekelman Industries, participated in Wheatland Tube’s decision to contribute when, after a lawyer for the company contacted him about the potential contributions, he proceeded to discuss the matter with executives of both companies who report to him.² The Complaint additionally alleges that Zekelman Industries knowingly solicited, and provided substantial assistance in the making of, the prohibited contributions based on the actions of the company’s lawyer and its executives.³

Wheatland Tube, Barry Zekelman, and Zekelman Industries (collectively, the “Zekelman Respondents”) submitted a joint Response denying that the contributions were prohibited foreign national contributions.⁴ They assert that Wheatland Tube’s president is a United States citizen

¹ See Compl. ¶¶ 1-2, 9-11 (Zekelman Industries, Inc., *et al.*) (May 21, 2019).

² *Id.* ¶¶ 9-11, 28-30.

³ *Id.* ¶¶ 2, 36, 38.

⁴ Wheatland Tube, LLC, Barry Zekelman, and Zekelman Industries Resp. at 3, MUR 7613 (July 5, 2019) (“Zekelman Resp.”).

1 who, after consulting with another Wheatland Tube officer, authorized and approved the
2 contributions to AFA.⁵

3 As discussed below, information received from the Zekelman Respondents indicates that
4 Barry Zekelman participated in Wheatland Tube's decision-making process to contribute to AFA
5 and that Zekelman Industries, through the actions of its executives, provided substantial
6 assistance in Wheatland Tube's making of prohibited foreign national contributions.
7 Accordingly, the Commission finds reason to believe that Wheatland Tube, LLC, Barry
8 Zekelman, and Zekelman Industries, Inc., violated 52 U.S.C. § 30121(a)(1)(A).

9 II. FACTUAL BACKGROUND

10 Wheatland Tube is a pipe and tube manufacturer that is organized under the laws of
11 Pennsylvania and is owned by Zekelman Industries, a company that is incorporated in Delaware
12 and headquartered in Illinois.⁶ Barry Zekelman, a Canadian citizen, is the CEO and executive
13 chairman of Zekelman Industries, and is also an owner of the company.⁷ Mickey McNamara is a
14 United States citizen and, according to the Zekelman Respondents, serves simultaneously as the
15 president of Wheatland Tube and general counsel of Zekelman Industries.⁸ In addition, Mike
16 Graham is a United States citizen and is Zekelman Industries' chief financial officer.⁹ Both
17 Graham and McNamara also serve as directors of Wheatland Tube.¹⁰ AFA is registered with the

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ Compl. ¶ 5; Zekelman Resp. at 1.

⁷ Compl. ¶ 5; Zekelman Resp. at 1.

⁸ Zekelman Resp. at 1.

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ *Id.* Complete information regarding Wheatland Tube's structure and governance, including whether it has additional directors, is unknown at this time.

1 Commission as an independent expenditure-only committee.¹¹ It has described itself, in an
2 archived version of its website from the time of the contributions in this matter, as “the primary
3 super PAC dedicated to electing federal candidates who support the agenda of the Trump-Pence
4 administration.”¹²

5 The Complaint’s allegations involve three contributions that Wheatland Tube made to
6 AFA in 2018: \$1 million on April 5, 2018; \$250,000 on June 4, 2018; and \$500,000 on October
7 17, 2018.¹³ The Complaint relies on a *New York Times* article to support the allegation that
8 Zekelman participated in Wheatland Tube’s decision to make the contributions.¹⁴

9 The joint Response submitted by Wheatland Tube, Zekelman, and Zekelman Industries
10 does not respond to the Complaint’s attached *New York Times* article.¹⁵ In a sworn declaration,
11 Zekelman acknowledges that he “discussed Wheatland Tube’s potential contributions to America
12 First” with McNamara.¹⁶ Zekelman also identifies Roger Schagrin as the “outside attorney” for
13 Zekelman Industries referenced in the Complaint, attesting that Schagrin “suggested to [him] that
14 a U.S.-based company with which [he is] affiliated should consider contributing to America
15 First” and this “led [him] to believe that [he] could communicate with others about potential

¹¹ AFA, Statement of Organization (Apr. 12, 2017).

¹² <https://web.archive.org/web/20180616235258/https://www.alapac.org/> (snapshot of June 16, 2018, showing quoted language in homepage header).

¹³ See Compl. ¶¶ 6-8; see also AFA, Amended 12-Day Pre-Election Report for the Primary at 23 (Aug. 22, 2018); AFA, June 2018 Quarterly Report at 34 (July 15, 2018); AFA, Amended 12-Day Report for the General Election, at 43 (Jan. 25, 2019).

¹⁴ Compl. ¶ 9 (citing Eric Lipton, *He’s One of the Biggest Backers of Trump’s Push to Protect American Steel. And He’s Canadian*, NEW YORK TIMES (May 20, 2019), <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/20/us/politics/hes-one-of-the-biggest-backers-of-trumps-push-to-protect-american-steel-and-hes-canadian.html> (“NYT Article”).

¹⁵ See generally Zekelman Resp.

¹⁶ *Id.*, Zekelman Decl. ¶ 4.

1 contributions.”¹⁷ McNamara, in a sworn declaration, states that after speaking with Zekelman,
2 he made the decision, in consultation with Graham, to contribute to AFA.¹⁸ McNamara attests
3 that he exercised “independent judgment and determined that the contributions were an
4 appropriate and beneficial corporate expenditure,” because he “believed that President Trump’s
5 trade policies were well-aligned with Wheatland Tube’s corporate interests.”¹⁹ The Zekelman
6 Respondents argue that “[t]hey did not know that having Mr. Zekelman participate in
7 communications about a contribution . . . could have any legal implications.”²⁰

8 **III. LEGAL ANALYSIS**

9 **A. Legal Standard**

10 The Act and Commission regulations prohibit any “foreign national” from directly or
11 indirectly making a contribution or donation of money or other thing of value, or an expenditure,
12 independent expenditure, or disbursement, in connection with a federal, state, or local election.²¹
13 The Act’s definition of “foreign national” includes an individual who is not a citizen or national
14 of the United States and who is not lawfully admitted for permanent residence, as well as a
15 “foreign principal” as defined at 22 U.S.C. § 611(b), which, in turn, includes a “partnership,

¹⁷ Zekelman Resp., Zekelman Decl. ¶ 3.

¹⁸ *Id.*, McNamara Decl. ¶¶ 5-7.

¹⁹ *Id.*, McNamara Decl. ¶ 6.

²⁰ Zekelman Resp. at 3.

²¹ 52 U.S.C. § 30121(a)(1); 11 C.F.R. § 110.20(b), (c), (e), (f). Courts have consistently upheld the provisions of the Act prohibiting foreign national contributions on the ground that the government has a clear, compelling interest in limiting the influence of foreigners over the activities and processes that are integral to democratic self-government, which include making political contributions and express advocacy expenditures. *See Bluman v. FEC*, 800 F. Supp. 2d 281, 288-89 (D.D.C. 2011), *aff’d* 132 S. Ct. 1087 (2012); *United States v. Singh*, 924 F.3d 1030, 1040-44 (9th Cir. 2019).

1 association, corporation, organization, or other combination of persons organized under the laws
2 of or having its principal place of business in a foreign country.”²²

3 Commission regulations implementing the Act’s foreign national prohibition provide that
4 “a foreign national shall not direct, dictate, control, or directly or indirectly participate in the
5 decision-making process of any person, such as a corporation . . . with regard to such person’s
6 . . . election-related activities, such as decisions concerning the making of contributions. . . .”²³
7 Commission regulations also prohibit any person from knowingly²⁴ soliciting, accepting, or
8 receiving a contribution from a foreign national,²⁵ and provide that “[n]o person shall knowingly
9 provide substantial assistance in the solicitation, making, acceptance, or receipt of a
10 contribution” prohibited by 11 C.F.R. § 110.20(b)-(d) and (g).²⁶

11 The Commission has found that not all participation by foreign nationals in the election-
12 related activities of others will violate the Act. In MUR 6959, for example, the Commission
13 found no reason to believe that a foreign national violated 52 U.S.C. § 30121 by performing

²² 52 U.S.C. § 30121(b); 22 U.S.C. § 611(b)(3); *see also* 11 C.F.R. § 110.20(a)(3).

²³ 11 C.F.R. § 110.20(i).

²⁴ The term “knowingly” is defined as having “actual knowledge” that the source of the funds is a foreign national, being aware of “facts that would lead a reasonable person to conclude that there is a substantial probability” that the source is a foreign national, or being aware of facts that would lead a reasonable person to inquire whether the source of the funds solicited is a foreign national, but the person failed to conduct a reasonable inquiry. 11 C.F.R. § 110.20(a)(4).

²⁵ 11 C.F.R. § 110.20(g); *see also* 52 U.S.C. § 30121(a)(2) (not including the “knowingly” standard). To “solicit” means “to ask, request, or recommend, explicitly or implicitly, that another person make a contribution, donation, transfer of funds, or otherwise provide anything of value.” 11 C.F.R. § 300.2(m) (incorporated by reference at 11 C.F.R. § 110.20(a)(6)).

²⁶ 11 C.F.R. § 110.20(h)(1). The Commission has explained that substantial assistance “means active involvement in the solicitation, making, receipt, or acceptance of a foreign national contribution or donation with an intent to facilitate successful completion of the transaction.” Explanation & Justification, Assisting Foreign National Contributions or Donations, 67 Fed. Reg. 67,928, 67,945 (Nov. 19, 2002). Moreover, substantial assistance “covers, but is not limited to, those persons who act as conduits or intermediaries for foreign national contributions or donations.” *Id.* at 66,946.

1 clerical duties, such as online research and translations, during a one month-long internship with
2 a party committee.²⁷ Similarly, in MURs 5987, 5995, and 6015, the Commission found no
3 reason to believe that a foreign national violated 52 U.S.C. § 30121 by volunteering his services
4 to perform at a campaign fundraiser and agreeing to let the political committee use his name and
5 likeness in its emails promoting the concert and soliciting support, where the record did not
6 indicate that the foreign national had been involved in the committee's decision-making process
7 in connection with the making of contributions, donations, expenditures, or disbursements.²⁸ By
8 contrast, the Commission has consistently found a violation of the foreign national prohibition
9 where foreign national officers or directors of a U.S. company participated in the company's
10 decisions to make contributions or in the management of its separate segregated fund,²⁹ or where
11 foreign funds were used by a U.S. subsidiary of a foreign corporation to make contributions or
12 donations in connection with U.S. elections.³⁰ The Commission has specifically determined that

²⁷ Factual and Legal Analysis at 4-5, MUR 6959 (Cindy Nava) (noting that the available information, which was based on two press reports that did not detail the foreign national's activities, did not indicate that the foreign national participated in any political committee's decision-making process). The Commission also found that a \$3,000 stipend that the foreign national received from third parties resulted in an in-kind contribution from the third parties to the committee, but the value of the foreign national volunteer's services to the committee was not a contribution. *Id.* at 4-5 (citing 52 U.S.C. § 30101(8)(A)(ii); 11 C.F.R. § 100.54; Advisory Op. 1982-04 (Apodaca)).

²⁸ Factual and Legal Analysis at 6-9, MURs 5987, 5995, and 6015 (Sir Elton John); *see also* Factual and Legal Analysis at 5, MUR 5998 (Lord Jacob Rothschild); Advisory Op. 2004-26 (Weller).

²⁹ *See, e.g.*, Conciliation Agreement, MUR 6093 (Transurban Grp.) (U.S. subsidiary violated Act by making contributions after its foreign parent company's board of directors directly participated in determining whether to continue political contributions policy of its U.S. subsidiaries); Conciliation Agreement, MUR 6184 (Skyway Concession Company, LLC) (U.S. company violated Act by making contributions after its foreign national CEO participated in company's election-related activities by vetting campaign solicitations or deciding which nonfederal committees would receive company contributions, authorizing release of company funds to make contributions, and signing contribution checks); Conciliation Agreement, MUR 7122 (American Pacific International Capital, Inc. ("APIC")) (U.S. corporation owned by foreign company violated Act by making contribution after its board of directors, which included foreign nationals, approved proposal by U.S. citizen corporate officer to contribute).

³⁰ *See* MUR 6203 (Itinere North America).

1 “no director or officer of the company or its parent who is a foreign national may participate in
2 any way in the decision-making process with regard to making . . . proposed contributions.”³¹

3 **B. There is Reason to Believe that Zekelman and Wheatland Tube Made**
4 **Prohibited Foreign National Contributions and Zekelman Industries**
5 **Provided Substantial Assistance in the Making of the Contributions**
6

7 The Zekelman Respondents assert that Wheatland Tube’s contributions to AFA were
8 funded by its corporate accounts and were not reimbursed by Zekelman or any other entity.³²
9 There is currently no information contradicting these assertions.³³

10 The available information nevertheless indicates that there is reason to believe that
11 Zekelman, a foreign national, directed or participated in Wheatland Tube’s decision-making
12 process to make the contributions, and Zekelman Industries, through the actions of its executives
13 who report to Zekelman, provided substantial assistance in the making of the prohibited
14 contributions. The Zekelman Respondents acknowledge that Zekelman participated in
15 discussions with top management at both Zekelman Industries and Wheatland Tube regarding
16 one of the companies making contributions to AFA.³⁴ In his sworn declaration, Zekelman
17 acknowledges that he “discussed Wheatland Tube’s potential contributions to America First”
18 with McNamara, after Schagrin suggested that one of the U.S.-based companies with which he is
19 affiliated consider contributing to AFA.³⁵ And McNamara acknowledges in his declaration not

³¹ Advisory Op. 1989-20 (Kuilima) at 2; *see also* Advisory Op. 1985-03 (Diridon) (stating that no person who is a foreign national can have any decision-making role or control with respect to any political contribution made by domestic company).

³² Zekelman Resp. at 3.

³³ Although their Response does not explicitly state that the funds were generated solely by Wheatland Tube’s domestic operations, there is no information in the record indicating that the contributions were funded by a foreign national.

³⁴ Zekelman Resp. at 3.

³⁵ Zekelman Resp., Zekelman Decl. ¶¶ 3-4.

1 only discussing the contributions with Zekelman, whom he knew to be a foreign national, but
2 also discussing them with Graham, director of Wheatland Tube and chief financial officer of
3 Zekelman Industries, before authorizing the contributions from Wheatland Tube.³⁶

4 The available information outlined above is similar to the facts and circumstances before
5 the Commission in MUR 7122 (APIC). In that matter, the Commission entered into a
6 conciliation agreement after an investigation revealed that a domestic company's foreign
7 national director and owner was solicited to make a contribution, discussed the company making
8 a contribution, and then emailed a U.S. director of the company to "follow up" on the potential
9 contributions.³⁷ The Commission concluded that the U.S. director, by effectuating the transfer of
10 funds for the contributions, per the participation of the foreign national in that decision-making
11 process, knowingly provided substantial assistance in the making of prohibited foreign national
12 contributions by the domestic company.³⁸ Similarly, here, as in MUR 7122 (APIC), the record
13 shows that the foreign national CEO of Wheatland Tube's parent company, Zekelman Industries,
14 discussed the matter with at least McNamara, another executive in both companies, who then
15 consulted another top official in the companies, before carrying out the making of the
16 contributions through U.S.-based Wheatland Tube.³⁹ As in MUR 7122 (APIC), the available
17 record here indicates that Zekelman directed or participated in Wheatland Tube's decision-
18 making process to make contributions in connection with a federal election, in a manner contrary

³⁶ Zekelman Resp., McNamara Decl. ¶¶ 6-7; Zekelman Resp. at 3.

³⁷ Conciliation Agreement § IV.7, MUR 7122 (APIC); Second General Counsel's Report at 2, 7, MUR 7122 (APIC); *see also* Factual and Legal Analysis at 7, MUR 7122 (APIC).

³⁸ Commission Certification (Aug. 7, 2018); Conciliation Agreement V, MUR 7122 (APIC); *see also* Second General Counsel's Report at 7, MUR 7122 (APIC).

³⁹ *See generally* Zekelman Resp.

1 to the Act’s foreign national prohibition and, further, that Zekelman Industries, through the
2 actions of its executives, knowingly provided substantial assistance in the making of such
3 contributions.

4 The Zekelman Respondents argue that the contributions were not prohibited because
5 McNamara, a U.S. citizen, determined that they “served Wheatland Tube’s interests” and
6 “exercised independent judgment” in approving them.⁴⁰ However, as discussed above, the key
7 issue is not whether a U.S. citizen or national had final decision-making authority or final say
8 regarding the making of the contribution or donation, but whether any foreign national directed,
9 dictated, controlled, or directly or indirectly participated in a decision-making process in
10 connection with election-related spending. Indeed, the Act’s prohibition on foreign nationals
11 directly or indirectly making contributions, as implemented by the Commission, requires that “no
12 director or officer of the company or its parent who is a foreign national may participate in *any*
13 *way* in the decision-making process with regard to making . . . proposed contributions.”⁴¹
14 Notably, the respondents in MUR 7122 (APIC) raised a nearly identical argument, which did not
15 persuade the Commission.⁴² The Commission specifically noted that a U.S. director’s assertion
16 that he had sole decision-making authority over a domestic company’s political contributions did
17 not “exclude the possibility that in his role as decision-maker” he sought approval from foreign
18 national directors and owners of the company, as he publicly acknowledged doing.⁴³ As such,

⁴⁰ Zekelman Resp. at 3-4.

⁴¹ Second General Counsel’s Report at 7, MUR 7122 (APIC) (quoting Advisory Opinion 1989-20 at 2) (emphasis added).

⁴² See Conciliation Agreement §§ IV.10, V, MUR 7122 (APIC); Factual and Legal Analysis at 5-6, MUR 7122 (APIC).

⁴³ Factual and Legal Analysis at 5-6, MUR 7122 (APIC).

1 regardless of whether the final decision on whether to contribute was McNamara’s, Zekelman’s
2 acknowledged role in contacting McNamara with the contribution proposal and discussing it
3 with him supports the inference that Zekelman participated in the decision-making process
4 regarding the contributions. Even if McNamara “exercised independent judgment” in approving
5 the contributions, that does not foreclose the possibility that Zekelman, as the CEO and chairman
6 of Zekelman Industries — the company that owns Wheatland Tube — vested McNamara with
7 the authority to make the contributions.⁴⁴ Additionally, the Zekelman Respondents’
8 acknowledgment that the contributions were made following the suggestion to Zekelman by
9 “Roger Schagrin, an outside lawyer for Zekelman Industries,”⁴⁵ indicates that Zekelman
10 Industries was aware of the circumstances of the contributions and thus knowingly provided
11 substantial assistance in the making of Wheatland Tube’s contributions.

12 Accordingly, the Commission finds reason to believe that: (1) Wheatland Tube violated
13 52 U.S.C. § 30121(a)(1)(A) by making foreign national contributions; (2) Zekelman violated 52
14 U.S.C. § 30121(a)(1)(A) by directing or participating in the decision-making process concerning

⁴⁴ The Commission has explained that foreign nationals must not be involved in selecting individuals who will make decisions regarding a company’s contributions and must also avoid selecting and giving those individuals election-related work assignments. *See* Factual & Legal Analysis at 6 n.30, MUR 7122 (APIC) (explaining that foreign national foreign corporate board members must abstain from voting on matters concerning an SSF, “including the selection of individuals to operate the SSF and to exercise decision making authority regarding contributions and expenditures” (quoting Factual & Legal Analysis at 11, MUR 3460 (Sports Shinko Co., Ltd.))); Advisory Opinion 2000-17 at 8 (Extendicare) (“selecting and giving PAC work assignments to personnel who will serve on the PAC Committee must be made only by US citizens or individuals lawfully admitted for permanent residence in the United States”); *see also* Advisory Opinion at 1990-8; Advisory Op. 2000-17 at 5-6. The Zekelman Respondents do not provide information regarding the structure of Wheatland Tube, whether Zekelman had any involvement in selecting individuals who have decision-making authority over contributions by Wheatland Tube, or whether he is involved in submitting contribution or other election-related requests or proposals to board members, though it may be inferred that Zekelman had such authority by virtue of his position as CEO and chairman of the company that owns Wheatland Tube and the admitted conversations regarding the contributions to AFA.

⁴⁵ Zekelman Resp. at 3.

MUR 7613 (Zekelman Industries, Inc., *et al.*)

Factual and Legal Analysis

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- 1 Wheatland's contributions; and (3) Zekelman Industries violated 52 U.S.C. § 30121(a)(1)(A) by
- 2 knowingly providing substantial assistance in the making of foreign national contributions.

BEFORE THE FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION

In the Matter of)	
)	
Zekelman Industries, Inc.,)	MUR 7613
Wheatland Tube, LLC)	
)	
)	

CONCILIATION AGREEMENT

This matter was generated by a complaint filed with the Federal Election Commission (“Commission”). The Commission found reason to believe that Zekelman Industries, Inc., and Wheatland Tube, LLC, (collectively, the “Respondents”) violated 52 U.S.C. § 30121(a)(1)(A).

NOW, THEREFORE, the Commission and the Respondents, having participated in informal methods of conciliation, prior to a finding of probable cause to believe, agree as follows:

I. The Commission has jurisdiction over the Respondents and the subject matter of this proceeding, and this agreement has the effect of an agreement entered pursuant to 52 U.S.C. § 30109(a)(4)(A)(i).

II. Respondents have had a reasonable opportunity to demonstrate that no action should be taken in this matter.

III. Respondents enter voluntarily into this agreement with the Commission.

IV. The pertinent facts in this matter are as follows:

1. Wheatland Tube, LLC, is a pipe and tube manufacturer that is organized under the laws of Pennsylvania.

2. Zekelman Industries, Inc., is the parent company of Wheatland Tube and is incorporated in Delaware and headquartered in Illinois.

3. Barry Zekelman is a Canadian citizen and is the Chief Executive Officer, Chairman, and an owner of Zekelman Industries.

4. Mickey McNamara is a United States citizen and is the President and a Director of Wheatland Tube and General Counsel of Zekelman Industries.

5. America First Action, Inc. (“AFA”), is registered with the Commission as an independent expenditure-only political committee. Jon Proch is its Treasurer.

6. Wheatland Tube made three contributions to AFA in the following amounts: \$1 million on April 5, 2018; \$250,000 on June 4, 2018; and \$500,000 on October 17, 2018.

7. Prior to Wheatland Tube’s contributions to AFA, Roger Schagrín, who is counsel for Zekelman Industries, communicated with Barry Zekelman regarding contributing to AFA through a U.S.-based company with which Zekelman was affiliated. Zekelman thereafter discussed the information provided by Schagrín and Wheatland Tube’s contributions to AFA with McNamara.

8. A “foreign national” is prohibited from directly or indirectly making a contribution or donation of money or other thing of value, or an expenditure, independent expenditure, or disbursement, in connection with a federal, state, or local election. 52 U.S.C. § 30121(a)(1); 11 C.F.R. § 110.20(b), (c), (e), (f). A “foreign national” includes an individual who is not a citizen or national of the United States and who is not lawfully admitted for permanent residence. 52 U.S.C. § 30121(b); 22 U.S.C. § 611(b)(3); *see also* 11 C.F.R. § 110.20(a)(3).

9. Commission regulations implementing the Act’s foreign national prohibition provide that “a foreign national shall not direct, dictate, control, or directly or

indirectly participate in the decision-making process of any person, such as a corporation . . . with regard to such person's . . . election-related activities, such as decisions concerning the making of contributions." 11 C.F.R. § 110.20(i).

V. Respondents contend that the contributions were made with the good faith understanding that they were permissible. Respondents further contend that Mr. McNamara, as the President of Wheatland Tube, and in consultation with and the concurrence of the other U.S.-based director of Wheatland Tube, exercised his authority to approve Wheatland Tube's contributions. Respondents also contend that the funds that were contributed to AFA came from Wheatland Tube's accounts, and the contributions were not reimbursed by Zekelman Industries, Mr. Zekelman, or any other entity or individual. And Respondents contend that neither Mr. McNamara nor Mr. Zekelman had an understanding that having Mr. Zekelman participate in discussions about a contribution, when the contribution would be made by a U.S. company with the approval of its U.S. officers and directors, could have any legal implications.

VI. As a result of Zekelman's communications regarding having Wheatland Tube contribute to AFA, Wheatland Tube, LLC and Zekelman Industries, violated 52 U.S.C. § 30121(a)(1) when Wheatland Tube made three contributions totaling \$1,750,000 to AFA after Zekelman, a foreign national and a Zekelman Industries officer and director, participated in Wheatland Tube's decision-making process in the making of the contributions.

VII. The Commission did not find that the violation was knowing or willful.

VIII. To resolve this matter expeditiously and without the uncertainty and expense of litigation, Respondents will take the following actions:

1. Respondents will cease and desist from committing further violations of 52 U.S.C. § 30121(a)(1)(A).
2. Respondents will pay a civil penalty to the Commission in the amount of nine hundred seventy-five thousand dollars (\$975,000), pursuant to 52 U.S.C. § 30109(a)(5)(A).
3. Respondents will request that AFA refund the \$1,750,000 in contributions or, in the alternative, request that AFA disgorge the \$1,750,000 in contributions to the U.S. Treasury. Respondents will inform the Commission when it notifies AFA of the matters set forth in this paragraph, and of any refund or disgorgement of the \$1,750,000 in contributions.

IX. The Commission, on request of anyone filing a complaint under 52 U.S.C. § 30109(a)(1) concerning the matters at issue herein or on its own motion, may review compliance with this agreement. If the Commission believes that this agreement or any requirement thereof has been violated, it may institute a civil action for relief in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia.

X. This agreement shall become effective as of the date that all parties hereto have executed the same and the Commission has approved the entire agreement.

XI. Respondents shall have no more than 30 days from the date this agreement becomes effective to comply with and implement the requirements contained in this

agreement and to so notify the Commission.

XII. This Conciliation Agreement constitutes the entire agreement between the Commission and Respondents and constitutes a final settlement as to Respondents and their officers and directors. No other statement, promise, or agreement, either written or oral, made by either party or by agents of either party, that is not contained in this written agreement shall be enforceable.

FOR THE COMMISSION:

Lisa J. Stevenson
Acting General Counsel

Charles
Kitcher

Digitally signed by
Charles Kitcher
Date: 2022.04.07
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BY:

Charles Kitcher
Associate General Counsel
for Enforcement

4/7/22
Date

FOR THE RESPONDENTS:



Thomas Spulak
Counsel for Respondents

March 24, 2022
March 24, 2022