

EXHIBIT J

News Article – “Industry official
says she’s never heard of
document disclosed in Noem
appraiser controversy”

[Politics](#)

Industry official says she's 'never heard' of document disclosed in Noem appraiser controversy

SDPB Radio | By [Lee Strubinger](#)

Published November 18, 2021 at 4:59 PM CST



SDPB

A document disclosure in the controversy surrounding Gov. Kristi Noem and her daughter is causing confusion in the South Dakota appraiser community.

The governor's daughter, Kassidy Peters, authorized the release of the document this week. It's a stipulation agreement. It shows that Peters was working with state officials last year on a path to an appraiser license, including additional classes and a re-submitted work sample.

The stipulation agreement is dated Aug. 5, 2020. That was about a week after a meeting attended by Peters, the governor, the head of the Appraiser Certification Program and other state officials. The governor is facing questions about whether she used the meeting to influence her daughter's licensure application. Noem says her daughter did not receive special treatment.

Some in the appraiser profession are not familiar with the type of document that Peters disclosed.

Amy Frink is the vice president of the Professional Appraiser Association of South Dakota. She's been an appraiser in northeast South Dakota since 1997 and has experience with the South Dakota [Appraiser Advisory Council](#). Frink has trained three appraiser apprentices. She says she's never seen a stipulation agreement.

"I don't have any personal experience with it. I've never heard the term before," Frink says. "Having been to many advisory council meetings and having been through this process several times, it's not a term I've ever heard used."

Frink says the typical document used to overcome problems with an appraiser's license application is an "agreed disposition."

[Agreed dispositions](#) are like a second chance for appraiser certification applicants — they're an agreement in lieu of being denied a certification upgrade.

It gives applicants a chance to fix things in their application, as well as take a few more hours of course work, and then resubmit their application.

SDPB asked the state Department of Labor why it used a stipulation agreement with Peters instead of an agreed disposition.

Dawn Dovre is a spokesperson for the department.

"For DLR's purposes, the terms 'stipulation agreement' and 'agreed disposition' are basically the same. The terms 'stipulation agreement' or 'agreed disposition' may be used interchangeably," Dovre said in email. "As in this context they are documents that simply set forth what is being agreed to between the applicant and the program."

The Legislature's Government Operations and Audit Committee [is investigating](#) the state Appraiser Certification Program, the July 2020 meeting and other related issues. The committee considered issuing a subpoena for Peters' agreed disposition but abandoned that subpoena after Peters disclosed the stipulation agreement.

State Sen. Kyle Schoenfish is the head of the committee.

"I think the documents substantially fulfill the information the committee was looking for," Schoenfish says.

The committee is issuing one other subpoena for Sherry Bren, who led the Appraiser Certification Program for 30 years. Months after she attended the July 2020 meeting with Noem, Peters and others, Bren says she was forced to retire and ultimately settled with the state for \$200,000 to drop an age-discrimination complaint.

A date for Bren's testimony has not yet been set.

Meanwhile, Peters included a letter with the release of the stipulation agreement this week. The letter says legislative and media investigations into the issue have ruined her business, and she is leaving the appraisal profession.