

Nonpublic Meetings Approved

TRENTON (AP)—Atty. Gen. William F. Hyland ruled yesterday that the Executive Commission on Ethical Standards can close its meetings to the public on certain occasions.

Hyland said the commission can close its sessions when it discuss ethics complaints, or to consider investigations of such complaints before holding a formal hearing on them.

But the attorney general ruled that the commission cannot bar the public from one of its meetings when it is examining a request by a public official for an advisory opinion on whether the individual's conduct in a particular matter meets state ethics standards.

Hyland said, however, that under certain circumstances such advisory matters can be held behind closed doors if the commission can validly determine that disclosure of the matter or the facts relating to it would be "an unwarranted invasion of individual privacy."

Hyland issued his opinion after it was requested by Elaine B. Goldsmith, director of the Ethical Standards Commission.

She requested advice on how the commission should treat the state "Sunshine" law that requires most government meetings to be held in public view.