

National Aeronautics and
Space Administration



Mary W. Jackson NASA Headquarters
Washington, DC 20546-0001

May 31, 2024

Reply to Attn of: General Law Practice Group

TO: Distribution

FROM: Agency Counsel for Ethics

SUBJECT: Determination Regarding Attendance by NASA Employees at the Coalition for Deep Space Exploration's "Returning to the Moon Reception" on June 5, 2024.

On June 5, 2024, the Coalition for Deep Space Exploration (Coalition), a nonprofit organization under 501(c)(6) of the Internal Revenue Code, will co-host with Aerojet Rocketdyne, L3 Harris Tech, Boeing, Jacobs, Lockheed Martin and Northrop Grumman a reception at the Dirksen Senate Office Bldg. (G-50), Washington, DC, from 5:30-7:30 pm. The Coalition is registered to and does engage in lobbying activities. The event is to provide a venue for informal discussion for representatives from industry, the legislative branch, and others interested in deep space human exploration and space science. The Coalition is in control of planning and organizing the event and issuing invitations.

Approximately 250 people are expected to attend the event. Attendees will have a diversity of views or interests and will include personnel from other federal agencies, representatives from the legislative branch, industry, and scientific organizations. The estimated cost of the event, including all food and beverages, is approximately \$42.00 per person. Attendance at this event will allow NASA attendees to exchange information regarding various NASA programs. I find that the event meets the requirements of a "widely attended gathering" as defined in 5 C.F.R. § 2635.204(g).

NASA employees, who do not have a significant role in a matter affecting the interests of the sponsor may accept an invitation for free attendance to the event. In those circumstances, I find that the Agency's interest in attendance outweighs any concern that the individual may be, or may appear to be, improperly influenced in the performance of their duties. However, NASA employees in non-career positions who are required to sign the ethics pledge under Executive Order 13989, may only attend if they reimburse the sponsor the value of the event.

Additionally, NASA employees who have a significant role in any pending matter affecting the interests of the Coalition, such as procurement duties, program management, or negotiating or administering a Space Act Agreement, should seek a separate determination from their local NASA ethics office as to whether they may accept the invitation.

You are reminded of the \$20 gift exception at 5 C.F.R. § 2635.204(a), which provides that you may accept gifts valued at no more than \$20 per occasion (and no more than \$50 from one source in a calendar year). We understand that the Coalition will be distributing "stress balls" with sponsor logos (valued at less than \$2) which NASA attendees, including NASA

employees in non-career positions who have signed the ethics pledge, may accept. An honor basket will be provided to reimburse for other gifts.

for Adam F. Greenstone