

National Aeronautics and
Space Administration



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

July 12, 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 Astroscale's Nihon Nights Reception on July 12, 2024

On July 12, 2024, Astroscale and Secure World Foundation (sponsor only) will host an event at Astroscale Holdings Inc., Hulin Kinshicho Collabo Tree, 4-17-1 Kinshi Sumida-Ku Tokyo. The event is to celebrate the end of the Summit for Space Sustainability, mingling for the global industry in Tokyo and see the new Astroscale headquarters. Astroscale is in control of all the arrangements and invitations for the event.

Approximately 90 people are expected to attend the event. Attendees will have a diversity of views or interests and will include members from the legislative branch, personnel from federal agencies, and industry representatives. The estimated value of the event, including all food and drink, is approximately \$94.99 (JPY 15,000) 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)(2). I further determine that there is an Agency interest in having NASA personnel attend the event because it will provide an opportunity for the invited persons to exchange ideas and views pertaining to NASA's policies, programs, and operations.

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 for themselves and a guest (if invited) 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 the event 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 Astroscale, such as procurement duties, program management, or negotiating or administering a Space Act Agreement, should seek a separate determination

from their local ethics counselor 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 Astroscale will be distributing Astroscale original sweets as a commemorative item of minimal value. All attendees, including NASA employees in non-career positions who have signed the ethics pledge, may accept this presentation item.

Adam F. Greenstone