

National Aeronautics and  
Space Administration  
**Goddard Space Flight Center**  
Greenbelt, MD 20771



May 1, 2009

Reply to Attn of: 140

TO: Distribution

FROM: 140/Chief Counsel

SUBJECT: Widely Attended Gathering Determination Regarding Attendance at an STS-125 Pre-Launch Reception

ATK Space Systems, Ball Aerospace & Technologies Corp, and Northrop Grumman are sponsoring a pre-launch reception currently scheduled for May 10, 2009, in anticipation of STS-125, the Hubble Space Telescope (HST) Servicing Mission 4 (SM4). The event will be held at the Doubletree Hotel in Cocoa Beach, FL from 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM. Approximately 250 individuals have been invited, including representatives from industry, state government, not-for-profit organizations, academia, the U.S. Congress, and Federal agencies. The cost per person is estimated to be approximately \$50.

Based on the above, I find that the event meets the requirements of a "widely attended gathering" as defined in 5 CFR 2635.204(g). I further find that there is an Agency interest in having NASA employees attend this event because attendance at the reception will allow NASA employees an opportunity to discuss the HST and Shuttle programs, as well as the Servicing Mission with Congressional members and staffers, state officials, industry representatives, and other guests. Accordingly, NASA employees whose duties do not substantially affect the event sponsors may accept an invitation for free attendance to the reception for themselves and their spouses or guests.

NASA employees whose duties substantially affect the event sponsors, for instance by way of procurement duties, should seek an individual determination regarding participation in this event from their local ethics counselor.

In addition to the reception food and beverages, each sponsor is planning on giving attendees gift items valued at less than \$5 each. Attendees are reminded of the \$20 gift exception at 5 CFR § 2635.204(a), which allows employees to accept gifts valued at no more than \$20 from a source per occasion. NASA invitees are reminded not to exceed the \$50 cap on gifts from one source in a calendar year.

  
Robert M. Stephens