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Langley Research Center
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May 12, 2016

Reply to Attn of: 30/Office of Chief Counsel

TO: Distribution

FROM: Chief Counsel

SUBJECT: Ethics Determination for Viking 40th Anniversary Reception, July 20, 2016

On Wednesday, July 20, 2016, the Virginia Air and Space Center (VASC) in Hampton, Virginia is hosting a reception at the VASC to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the NASA Viking mission. This event is associated with but not part of the NASA technical symposium held earlier that day. The host expects about 200 individuals to attend the reception, including people who worked on the Viking mission, state and local officials, community leaders, and representatives of the defense and aerospace industry. The reception will include food, beverages, and entertainment of an approximate value of \$75 per person.

In accordance with 5 C.F.R. §2635.204(g) and 14 C.F.R. §1207.103, I find that the event meets the definition of a “widely attended gathering.” I also find that there is an Agency interest in having NASA personnel and any accompanying invited guests attend this event because it will further agency programs and operations. NASA invitees will have the opportunity to discuss the Agency’s activities in Virginia, and exchange information on NASA programs with other attendees. I further conclude that NASA’s interest in its employees attending this event outweighs any concern that attendance may appear to improperly influence any NASA personnel in the performance of their official duties.

Accordingly, NASA employees who have been invited to attend may accept free attendance at the event for themselves and a guest, if invited.

NASA employees whose duties may substantially affect the hosts, and NASA employees who are in non-career positions in which Executive Order 13490 requires signing an ethics pledge, are not covered by this determination and should seek a determination from their ethics counselor pursuant to 5 CFR 2635.204(g)(3)(i) regarding their participation in these events.

Questions about this determination may be addressed to Kenneth Goetzke, at 757-864-7390.


William T. McMurry, Jr.
Chief Counsel and
Deputy Designated Agency Ethics Official