

National Aeronautics and  
Space Administration



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

March 22, 2022

Reply to Attn of: General Law Practice Group

TO: Distribution

FROM: Agency Counsel for Ethics

SUBJECT: Determination Regarding Attendance by NASA employees at the Arianespace Reception on March 23, 2022

On March 23, 2022, Arianespace, part of ArianeGroup, will host a reception at Longview Gallery in Washington, DC, starting at 6:00 p.m. The event will provide a forum for informal discussion on satellite technology and challenges with attendees of the Satellite Conference.

Approximately 200 people have been invited to attend. Attendees will have a diversity of views or interests and will include representatives from the legislative branch, state and local government officials, representatives from industry, employees of Federal agencies, and foreign government officials, including the French Ambassador. The estimated cost of the event, including all food and beverages, is \$200 per person. Arianespace is in control of the organizing, planning and invitations for this event. 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 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 Arianespace or ArianeGroup, 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.

*Kathleen T. Spear*

*for* Adam F. Greenstone