

National Aeronautics and Space Administration



**Headquarters**  
Washington, DC 20546-0001

February 11, 2020

Reply to Attn of: **General Law Practice Group**

**TO:** Distribution

**FROM:** Agency Counsel for Ethics

**SUBJECT:** Determination Regarding Attendance by NASA Employees at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce 2020 Annual Aviation Summit on March 5, 2020

On March 5, 2020, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, a non-profit organization under Section 501(c)(6) of the Internal Revenue Service Code, will hold a breakfast, lunch and reception in conjunction with the 2020 Annual Aviation Summit, at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center in Washington, DC, from 7:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. The event is to provide a venue for informal discussion for representatives from a wide range of backgrounds on technology, innovation and the future of aviation. Approximately 3,500 people are expected to attend the event. Attendees will have a diversity of views or interests and will include representatives from the legislative branch, academia, industry, media, personnel from other federal agencies, professional societies, scientific organizations, and members of the public. The estimated cost of the event, including all food and beverages, is approximately \$25 per person for breakfast, approximately \$40 per person for lunch, and approximately \$35 per person for the reception. A wide segment of the aviation industry will be represented by the speakers at the various events. Additionally, the Carol B. Hallett award will be awarded during the reception. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is in control of all the arrangements and invitations for this event. Attendance at this event will allow NASA attendees to exchange information regarding various NASA programs.

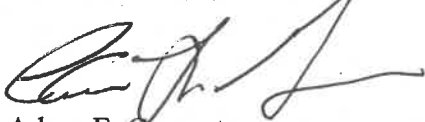
I find that these events meet the requirements of a “widely attended gathering” as defined in 5 C.F.R. § 2635.204(g). I further determine that there is an Agency interest in having NASA personnel attend these events because it will provide an opportunity for the invited persons to exchange ideas and views pertaining to NASA’s policies, programs and operations. 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. Accordingly, NASA employees who do not have a significant role in a matter affecting the interests of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce may accept an invitation for free attendance to these events from the organizer.

However, NASA employees in non-career positions who are required to sign the ethics pledge under Executive Order 13770 may only attend if they reimburse the sponsors the fair market

value of these events. It is our understanding that there will be an honor basket available at each event for employees who must reimburse to attend.

Additionally, NASA employees who have a significant role in any pending matter affecting the interests of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 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.

Attendees are also reminded of the \$20 gift exception at 5 C.F.R. § 2635.204(a), which provides that employees 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 there will be "door prizes" given out as gifts during the reception. NASA employees may only accept these door prize/gifts if they reimburse the fair market value of the gift.



Adam F. Greenstone