

National Aeronautics and Space Administration



Langley Research Center
100 NASA Road
Hampton, VA 23681-2199

July 16, 2021

Reply to Attn of: 30/Office of General Counsel

TO: Distribution

FROM: Chief Counsel

SUBJECT: Ethics Determination: NASA Employee Attendance at Virginia Space Reception for Mr. & Mrs. Dale Nash, Chincoteague Island, Virginia, July 30, 2021

On Friday, July 30, 2021, Virginia Space will host a reception on Chincoteague Island, Virginia, honoring their departing Executive Director, Mr. Dale Nash, and his wife. The organizers have invited over 400 individuals plus guests to attend, including state and local officials, community leaders, representatives of the aerospace industry, and about 15 NASA employees. The reception will include food and beverages at an estimated cost of about \$25 to \$40 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” and that there is an Agency interest in having NASA personnel attend this event, as it will further Agency programs and interests. NASA invitees will have the opportunity to discuss Agency activities and developments in space launch capabilities. I further conclude that NASA’s interest in its employees attending this event outweighs any concern that attendance may appear to improperly influence NASA personnel in the performance of their official duties.

However, NASA employees in non-career positions who are required to sign the ethics pledge under Executive Order 13989 may only attend if they reimburse the hosts the value of the event. Additionally, NASA employees whose duties may substantially affect the sponsor, such as by way of procurement duties or administration of Space Act agreements, should seek an individual determination pursuant to 5 C.F.R. § 2635.204(g)(4) regarding participation in the event from their NASA ethics office. Attendees are reminded to exercise COVID-19 precautions appropriate to their individual situation.

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

Charles A. Polen
Chief Counsel and
Deputy Designated Agency Ethics Official