

National Aeronautics and Space Administration



Headquarters
Washington, DC 20546-0001

December 18, 2019

Reply to Attn of: General Law Practice Group

TO: Distribution

FROM: Agency Counsel for Ethics

SUBJECT: Determination Regarding Attendance by NASA employees at the Maryland Space Business Roundtable (MSBR) Lunch on January 21, 2020

On January 21, 2020, the Maryland Space Business Roundtable (MSBR), a nonprofit organization under 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, will host a lunch at the Martin's Crosswinds in Greenbelt, MD, starting at 11:30 a.m. The guest speaker is Dr. Neil Jacobs, Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Environmental Observation and Prediction, performing the duties of Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Approximately 350 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, academia, media and members of the public. The estimated cost of the event, including all food and beverages, is \$34 per person. MSBR 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, including NASA employees in non-career positions who are required to sign the ethics pledge under Executive Order 13770, who do not have a significant role in a matter affecting the interests of the sponsor may accept an invitation for free attendance 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 who have a significant role in any pending matter affecting the interests of the MSBR, 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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Adam F. Greenstone".

Adam F. Greenstone