

National Aeronautics and Space Administration



Headquarters
Washington, DC 20546-0001

February 6, 2020

Reply to Attn of: General Law Practice Group

TO: Distribution

FROM: Alternate Designated Agency Ethics Official

SUBJECT: Determination Regarding Attendance by NASA Employees at NG-13 Commercial Resupply Service Mission Launch Events hosted by Northrop Grumman on or about February 9, 2020

Northrop Grumman is scheduled to launch the NG-13 Commercial Resupply Service (CRS) Mission on an Antares launch vehicle from NASA's Wallops Flight Facility at Wallops Island, Virginia, currently scheduled for approximately February 9, 2020. The events include an evening reception at Ropewalk Restaurant, Chincoteague, Virginia, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. the evening before the launch, as well as snacks, dessert and beverages at the launching viewing site.

Approximately 800 guests have been invited to attend. Invitees include members of the legislative branch, NASA personnel, state and local government officials, industry representatives, academia, and personnel from other Federal agencies. The value of the events, which include all food and refreshments, will be approximately \$51.50 per person (\$40.00 for the evening reception, and \$11.50 for the snacks, dessert and beverages at the launch viewing site). I find that these events meet the requirements of a "widely attended gathering" as defined in 5 C.F.R. § 2635.204(g)(2).

I further determine that free attendance at the above mentioned events are in the interest of the agency because it will further agency programs and operations. Attendance at these events will allow NASA attendees to exchange information regarding various NASA programs. Accordingly, NASA employees (subject to the exceptions noted below) who have been invited to attend may accept free attendance for themselves and a guest to the evening reception.

However, NASA employees whose duties may substantially affect an event sponsor, such as by way of contracting duties, should seek an individual determination pursuant to 5 C.F.R. § 2635.204(g)(3)(i), regarding participation at the evening reception from their local ethics counselor. Moreover, NASA employees who are in non-career positions in which Executive Order 13770 requires signing an ethics pledge may only attend the evening reception or accept the wine toast if they reimburse the sponsor the value of the events and any gift items

accepted for themselves and their guest. However, all NASA employees may accept the non-alcoholic beverages and light refreshments offered at the viewing site.

Attendees are 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 that Northrop Grumman will be distributing a mission patch (\$2.35) and decal (\$.85), a Northrop Grumman bag (\$2.25), and a pair of Antares socks (\$10.00), the total value of which is \$15.45. NASA employees in non-career positions who have signed the ethics pledge may accept the mission patch and decal; however, they may only accept the other items if they reimburse the sponsor.

Kathleen T. Spear

for Adam F. Greenstone