

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

**Headquarters**  
Washington, DC 20546-0001



April 30, 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 SpaceX Satellite Reception on May 6, 2019

On May 6, 2019, SpaceX will host a reception at the Monaco Hotel in Washington, D.C. starting at 8:00 p.m. The event will provide a forum for informal discussion with the attendees of the Satellite 2019 Conference, a forum in which various aspects of space policy and activity will be discussed. SpaceX is in control of the planning and invitations for the reception.

Approximately 200 people are expected to attend the reception. Attendees will have a diversity of views or interests and will include personnel from other federal agencies, representatives from the legislative branch of the government, academia, industry, media, and members of the public. The estimated cost for the reception, including all food and beverages, is approximately \$100 per person. Attendance at this event will allow NASA attendees to exchange information regarding various NASA missions and programs and keep abreast of commercial space sector developments. I find that this event meets 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. Accordingly, NASA employees who do not have a significant role in a matter affecting the interests of SpaceX may accept an invitation for free attendance to this 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 13770 may only attend the reception if they reimburse the organizers the fair market value of the event. Additionally, NASA employees who have a significant role in any pending matter affecting the interests of any of the organizers, 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 for this event.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Greenstone', written in a cursive style.

Adam F. Greenstone