



July 24, 2023

Reply to Attn of: 140

TO: Distribution

FROM: 140/Chief Counsel

SUBJECT: Widely Attended Gathering Determination Regarding Attendance at the Northrop Grumman NG-19 Commercial Resupply Service (CRS) Mission Antares Launch Activities and Reception, to Take Place No Earlier than July 31, 2023

Northrop Grumman is scheduled to launch the NG-19 CRS Mission on an Antares launch vehicle at a date no earlier than August 1, 2023. In connection with this event, Northrop Grumman is hosting an evening reception the day before the planned launch and will be providing mementos to the guests and light snacks the day of the launch at the Launch Viewing Site. Transportation to the site will be provided by NASA. The reception is being held at the NASA Wallops Flight Facility (WFF) in conjunction with NASA's guest operations.

Approximately 500 guests have been invited to the event. Attendees will have a diversity of views or interests and include members of Congress, Congressional staff, NASA personnel, state and local officials, academia, U.S. and international industry representatives, and personnel from other federal agencies involved in space launch activities. The estimated cost per person of the reception is \$50, and the estimated cost per person of snacks provided at the launch site is \$9; thus, the estimated cost of attendance per person for the entire event is approximately \$59. Attendance at the reception will allow NASA employees to exchange information regarding various NASA and industry programs and space launch criteria. I find that the event meets the requirements of a "widely attended gathering" as defined in 5 CFR 2635.204(g)(2).

Additionally, guests at this reception will be provided with launch gift mementos worth approximately \$16.86. NASA employees may accept this memento package pursuant to 5 CFR 2635.204(a), as it is an unsolicited gift from a prohibited source worth \$20 or less. However, the total value of gifts accepted from Northrop Grumman in one calendar year cannot exceed \$50. Thus, if an employee has received gifts worth approximately \$33 or more from Northrop Grumman in 2023, they should decline this memento package or pay the market value for it.

I further determine that there is an Agency interest in having NASA personnel attend the event, as it will provide an opportunity for the invited guests to exchange views about NASA and industry programs, policies, and operations, including future planned launches and missions involving space launch vehicles. I therefore conclude that NASA's interest in its employees attending this event outweighs any concern that free attendance may, or may appear to, improperly influence NASA employees in the performance of their official duties.

Accordingly, NASA employees who do not have a significant role in a matter affecting the interests of Northrop Grumman, including employees in non-career positions for which the Executive Order 13770 requires signing an ethics pledge, may accept an invitation for free attendance to the event for themselves and their spouses or guests. Employees should attend this event on their own time.

However, NASA employees who have a significant role in any pending matter affecting the interests of Northrop Grumman, such as procurement duties, program management, or negotiating or administering a Space Act Agreement, should seek an individual determination regarding participation in this even from their local ethics counselor.

Thomas Browder Date: 2023.07.24  
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