



January 22, 2026

Reply to Attn of: General Law Practice Group

TO: Distribution  
FROM: Agency Counsel for Ethics  
SUBJECT: Determination Regarding Attendance by NASA employees at the 69<sup>th</sup> Annual Dr. Robert H. Goddard Memorial Dinner on March 13, 2026

On March 13, 2026, the National Space Club and Foundation (Club), a nonprofit organization under 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, will host a reception and a dinner at the Washington Hilton Hotel, 1919 Connecticut Avenue, Washington, DC, 20009, the reception starts at 6:30 p.m. and the dinner is at 7:30 p.m. Awards will be presented to several outstanding individuals for accomplishments in spaceflight, engineering, science, management, and education. The premier award, the Goddard Trophy, will be presented to the individual, group or program deemed to have made the most significant contribution to space activity in the previous year.

Approximately 2,000 people are expected to attend the event. Attendees will have a diversity of views or interests and will include representatives of the legislative branch, academia, industry, and media, as well as employees of other federal agencies and members of the public. The estimated value of the reception and dinner, including all food and beverages, is \$480 per person. The National Space Club is in control of the planning and seating for both the reception and dinner.

Attendance at this event will allow NASA attendees to exchange information regarding various NASA programs. There is also an Agency interest in having NASA personnel attend this event because it will provide an opportunity for the invited persons to exchange ideas and views pertaining to NASA's policies, programs and operations. I find that the reception and dinner meet the requirements of a "widely attended gathering" as defined in 5 C.F.R. § 2635.204(g).

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 National Space Club and Foundation, such as procurement duties, program management, or negotiating or administering a Space Act Agreement, should seek a separate determination from their local NASA ethics office as to whether they may accept the invitation. Also, NASA employees who receive an invitation from an entity other than the National Space Club and Foundation should seek a separate determination from their local NASA ethics office.

This widely attended gathering determination does not cover receptions in hospitality suites that may occur both before and after the Goddard Memorial Awards Reception. These suites will be hosted by corporate sponsors. NASA employees may receive refreshments provided in

these suites under the exception to the gift rules that allows acceptance of gifts (including refreshments and tangible gift items) with an aggregate value of \$20 or less per event, though not to exceed \$50 from the same source in the same year.

Adam F. Greenstone