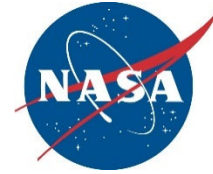


National Aeronautics and Space Administration



Langley Research Center
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March 27, 2026

Reply to Attn of: 30/Office of the General Counsel

TO: Distribution

FROM: Chief Counsel

SUBJECT: Ethics Determination Regarding NASA Employee Attendance at the 2026 State of the City Address - Newport News

On April 13, 2026, the City of Newport News will host a State of the City Address. This event will be held at the Ferguson Center for the Arts located at 1 Avenue of the Arts, Newport News, Virginia.

The organizers expect approximately 500-600 people to attend, including invited NASA employees, military and civilian employees of other Federal agencies, government support contractors, industry partners, educators, state and local community leaders, state elected officials, and members of the public.

The event will be centered on the mayor's speech while a catered dinner is served. There will also be the opportunity to network among the invited guests. Registration for the event is advertised as \$45 per person.

In addition to the City of Newport News hosting this event, the sponsors will likely include Towne Bank, Christopher Newport University, BayPort Credit Union, Hampton Virginia Economic Development, Langley Credit Union, Sentara Health, Virginia Natural Gas, Dominion Energy, Newport News Shipbuilding – A Division of HII, Cox Communications, Ferguson, Newport News Economic Development Authority, Newport News Public Schools, and others.

NASA employees may accept free attendance. In accordance with 5 C.F.R. §2635.204(g) and 14 C.F.R. §1207.103, I find that this event meets the definition of a "widely attended gathering." I also find that there is an Agency interest in having invited NASA personnel attend these events, as it will further Agency programs and interests. NASA invitees will have the opportunity to discuss the Administration's activities, and exchange information on NASA programs. I further conclude that NASA's interest in its employees attending this event outweighs any concern that attendance may appear to improperly influence NASA personnel in the performance of their official duties.

NASA employees who have a significant role in any pending sensitive matter that will substantially affect the interests of the host and sponsors, and NASA employees who have non-career political appointments, are not covered by this determination and should seek a separate determination from their ethics counselor regarding their participation in this event.

Questions about this determination may be addressed to Sara Rathgeber at sara.m.rathgeber@nasa.gov or 757-864-4301.

Andrea Z. Warmbier