National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center
2101 NASA Parkway
Houston, TX 77058-3696

September 28, 2026

Reply to Attn of: AL-26-082

TO: SA/M. A. Frieling

FROM: AL/R. T. Suratt

SUBJECT: Widely Attended Gathering Determination Regarding Attendance at the 12th Annual Women in Science with Excellence Luncheon

On September 29, 2026, BioHouston, a nonprofit organization dedicated to accelerating the growth of Houston's life sciences and biotechnology commercialization, will host the 12th Annual Women in Science with Excellence (WISE) Luncheon at the Hotel Zaza Museum District in Houston, Texas from 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. The purpose of the event is to recognize the achievement and impact of women who have contributed to the advancement of science, technology, education, and science in Houston.

NASA employee Michelle Frieling has been invited to attend and is permitted to bring one guest by the event sponsors. The total number of attendees is expected to be 150-170, including a broad mix of leaders from academia, health, government, and nonprofit sectors.

Tickets have been made available to the general public from $125 to $200. There are currently no planned gifts or giveaways for attendees, and no fundraising activities will take place in conjunction with the event.

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 NASA participation because the event provides an opportunity to exchange views and information relevant to NASA's programs and operations with leaders from other sectors. Accordingly, NASA employees who do not have a significant role in matters affecting the interests of BioHouston or any event sponsor may accept invitations for free attendance to the Luncheon for themselves and one guest. In those cases, I find that the Agency's interest in attendance outweighs any concern that the individuals may be, or may appear to be, improperly influenced in the performance of their official duties.

NASA employees who have a significant role in any pending matter affecting the interests of

BioHouston or any of the sponsors, 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.

RANDALL SURATT

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Randall T. Suratt
Chief Counsel

cc:
HQ/Ethics Team