




**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**  
Washington, D.C. 20460

**JUN - 8 2017**

OFFICE OF  
GENERAL COUNSEL

**MEMORANDUM**

**SUBJECT:** Participation in Specific Party Matters Involving Your Former Employer, the American Chemistry Council

**FROM:** Kevin S. Minoli   
Designated Agency Ethics Official and  
Acting General Counsel

**TO:** Nancy Beck, Ph.D., DABT  
Deputy Assistant Administrator  
Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention

Effective April 30, 2017, you joined the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in an Administratively Determined (AD) position as the Deputy Assistant Administrator for the Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention (OCSPP). In this position, you are responsible for advising the Acting Assistant Administrator in matters pertaining to chemical safety, pollution prevention, pesticides and toxic substances, including implementation of rulemaking under applicable federal statutes. Previous to your selection, you served as the Senior Director of Regulatory Science Policy at the American Chemistry Council (ACC), which represents companies that are directly regulated by EPA. You seek permission to participate in specific party matters involving your former employer.

In providing my advice, I have taken into consideration the fact that, as an AD appointment, you are not required to sign the Trump ethics pledge because this type of appointment falls outside the definition of "appointee" set forth at Executive Order 13,770 at Section 2(b).<sup>1</sup> You do not have any financial conflict of interest with your former employer, so the ethics rules to be applied to you are set forth in the Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch, 5 C.F.R. Part 2635, specifically Subpart E, "Impartiality in Performing Official Duty." Pursuant to 5 C.F.R. § 2635.502(b)(1)(iv), you have a "covered relationship" with ACC as your former employer. For one year from the time you resigned from ACC, absent an impartiality determination from me, you cannot participate in any specific party matter in which ACC is a party or represents a party if that matter is likely to have a direct and predictable financial effect upon the ACC or if the circumstances would cause a reasonable

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<sup>1</sup> See Office of Government Ethics advisories entitled "Guidance on Executive Order 13770," LA-17-03 (3/20/27) and Executive Order 13770," LA-17-02 (2/6/17), which apply the following OGE advisories from the last administration in full: "Who Must Sign the Ethics Pledge?" DO-09-010 (3/16/09); and "Signing the Ethics Pledge," DO-09-005 (2/10/09).

person with knowledge of the relevant facts to question your impartiality. *See* 5 C.F.R. § 2635.502(a).

It is important to note that the ethical restriction applies only to particular matters involving specific parties, not to particular matters of general applicability. Generally speaking, a “specific party” matter is a “proceeding affecting the legal rights of parties, or an isolatable transaction or related set of transactions between identified parties.” *See* 5 C.F.R. § 2640.102(l). Rulemaking is not usually a “specific party” matter but rather a matter of general applicability, which involves “deliberation, decision, or action that is focused upon the interests of specific persons, or a discrete and identifiable class of persons.” *See* 5 C.F.R. § 2640.103(a)(1). Therefore, under the ethics regulations, you may participate in rulemaking, even if that rulemaking may affect the members of your former employer. While you can ethically work on rulemaking in general, you have been advised -- and understand -- that you cannot participate in any meetings, discussions or decisions that relate to any individual ACC comment nor attend any meeting at which ACC is present.

As provided by the ethics regulations, however, federal ethics officials can nonetheless permit employees to participate in matters that might raise impartiality concerns when the interest of the federal government in that employee’s participation outweighs concern over the questioning of the “integrity of the agency’s programs and operations.” *See* 5 C.F.R. § 2635.502(d). The factors that we can take into consideration are:

- (1) the nature of the relationship involved;
- (2) the effect that resolution of the matter will have upon the financial interest of the person affected in the relationship;
- (3) the nature and importance of the employee’s role in the matter, including the extent to which the employee is called upon to exercise discretion in the matter;
- (4) the sensitivity of the matter;
- (5) the difficulty of reassigning the matter to another employee; and
- (6) adjustments that may be made in the employee’s duties that would reduce or eliminate the likelihood that a reasonable person would question the employee’s impartiality.

In reviewing these factors, I have decided to allow you to participate fully in matters of general applicability, including rulemaking, including consideration of any comments that were made by ACC. In making this determination, I have taken the following factors into consideration:

- While at ACC, you served as the Senior Director of Regulatory Science Policy and worked extensively on risk assessment, science policy and rulemaking issues;
- As ACC’s leading expert for ensuring sound implementation of risk assessment practices in the Frank R. Lautenberg Chemical Safety for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act, you have valuable expertise to share as the Agency considers how to implement this new statute;
- You have extensive prior expertise with the regulated industry’s perspective and are already familiar with (and may well have authored) ACC comments now under consideration. Because your prior knowledge is inherently part of your expertise, it is impractical to excise that knowledge from how you carry out your Agency duties;

- While you still participate in an ACC defined contribution plan, neither you nor your former employer continues to make contributions. Pursuant to federal ethics regulations, this type of employee benefit plan does not present any financial conflict of interest. See 5 C.F.R. § 2640.201(c);
- Your unique expertise, knowledge and prior experience will ensure that the Agency is able to consider all perspectives, including that of the regulated industry's major trade association;
- Although your type of appointment at EPA is not a political one, you currently serve in the only non-career position in the Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention. As such, you have a unique role in advising political staff, including the Administrator, and need to be able to be able to consider as many perspectives as you can; and
- Participation in rulemaking matters is integral to your position, so the Agency has a strong and compelling interest in ensuring that you are able to advise the Administrator, the Acting Assistant Administrator and career staff to the maximum extent possible.

Under the federal ethics regulations, you are permitted to participate in matters of general applicability (such as rulemaking) even if individual members of your former employer will be affected by that particular matter. Until now, you have recused yourself from participating personally and substantially in those comments to rulemaking that were offered by ACC. This impartiality determination confirms that you are permitted to participate in any discussions or consideration of comments submitted by ACC to rulemaking or other matters of general applicability. You may also attend meetings at which ACC is present or represented, but only if the following conditions are met: (a) the subject matter of the discussion is a particular matter of general applicability, (b) other interested non-federal entities are present besides only ACC, and (c) you are not the only Agency official at the meeting. This authorization will remain in effect for the remainder of your cooling off period. After April 21, 2018, you will no longer have a covered relationship with ACC under the impartiality standards and will no longer require this determination. I am attaching a recusal statement for you to sign and issue to your staff.

If you have any questions regarding this determination, or if a situation arises in which you need advice or clarification, please contact Justina Fugh at [fugh.justina@epa.gov](mailto:fugh.justina@epa.gov) or (202) 564-1786.

Attachment

cc: Wendy Cleland-Hamnett, Acting Assistant Administrator  
Justina Fugh, Senior Counsel for Ethics