



INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

100 North Senate Avenue
Room N725

Phone: 317 232-5095

Eric Holcomb, Governor

Michael J. Smith, Commissioner

FILED

October 9, 2024

OCT 9 2024

INDIANA STATE
ETHICS COMMISSION

Katherine Noel, Chair
Indiana State Ethics Commission
315 West Ohio Street, Room 104
Indianapolis, Indiana 46202

RE: Waiver of Application of 42 IAC 1-5-1 (the "Gift Rule") to receive dinner to be received by INDOT Employees for the 6th Annual WTS Awards Gala ("WTS Awards Gala") on November 14, 2024.

Commissioner Michael J. Smith, the appointing authority of the Indiana State Department of Transportation ("INDOT"), has designated authority to me as the agency's ethics officer to waive application of the Gift Rule in individual cases when consistent with the public interest. I am hereby waiving application of 42 IAC 1-5-1 (a) in relation to INDOT employees, Debbie Calder, Jess K. Miller, Kaitlyn Taylor, Destiny Golladay, Chaila Jordan, and Josie Craine, in relation to their attendance at the 6th Annual WTS Awards Gala on November 14, 2024. The aforementioned INDOT employees' attendance is being sponsored by INDOT vendor, RQAW|DCCM. The attendees will benefit from attendance for the reasons provided below.

The WTS Awards Gala will be held at the Indianapolis Arts Garden, 110 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204. The aforementioned INDOT employees are not required to pay to attend the event, but rather is being invited to sit at the table sponsored by RQAW|DCCM, a construction contractor that currently does business with INDOT at a total cost of four hundred and fifty dollars (\$45.00). A total of six (6) attendees at \$75 per attendee, which includes an event ticket and meal. RQAW|DCCM is paying \$75 for INDOT employees, Debbie Calder, Jess K. Miller, Kaitlyn Taylor, Destiny Golladay, Chaila Jordan, and Josie Craine to attend. No other items of value are being given to these employees, and they have been instructed not to accept any item offered.

INDOT personnel covered by this waiver were instructed not to accept any other item of value from any other person or entity if that person or entity may have a business relationship with INDOT or may seek to influence an action by one or more INDOT personnel in his or her official capacity. INDOT personnel are regularly informed that the safest course of action at any industry event is to assume that anyone in attendance from the private sector might have a business relationship with INDOT.

RQAW|DCCM has ongoing business interests in INDOT operations and contracting opportunities. RQAW|DCCM provides preconstruction, design/build, construction management, and general contracting services. This firm has worked on the following recent INDOT projects: Roadway Rehabilitation Design Services US 31 Concrete Pavement Restoration (CPR) in Clark Co., Construction Inspection Services SR 29 Full Depth Reclamation (FDR) in Carroll Co., Project Development Services US 231 Road Rehabilitation (3R/4R Standards) in Putnam Co., and Project

Development Services - Road US 40 HMA Overlay Minor Structural in Putnam Co.

WTS Foundation is an independent, non-profit council members committed to attract, sustain, connect, and advance women and the unrepresented in the transportation industry in the pursuit of equity and access. Its purpose is to advance transportation, professional and workforce development, gender equity advocacy, and building the future of transportation. WTS provides a number of ongoing forums in which peers and colleagues can meet to share information and discuss items of mutual interest, such as DBEs, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion, workforce development, as well as educational programming. The WTS Foundation offers frequent seminars, professional development opportunities, and special presentations featuring both national experts and local leadership.

The 2024 6th Annual WTS Awards Gala is primarily a networking event and a celebration of the private-public partnerships underlying successful transportation infrastructure projects delivered during 2023. It is further an opportunity to give companies the occasion to be recognized for their commitment to nothing less than safety excellence in their operations. The WTS Foundation is one of a handful of organizations dedicated to promoting women in the transportation industry, engages transportation colleagues and leaders in discussion about the most vital transportation issues of the day, and awards scholarships to assist young women who aspire to a professional career in transportation.

As such, the participation of INDOT personnel in events such as the 6th Annual WTS Awards Gala, is hugely beneficial to ensure that INDOT has representation at the event since the award is related to an INDOT project, to strengthen relationships with critical stakeholders, connect with industry leaders, and answer questions concerning and otherwise speak to INDOT capital planning and operations. A waiver of the gift rule to allow Debbie Calder, Jess K. Miller, Kaitlyn Taylor, Destiny Golladay, Chaila Jordan, and Josie Craine to accept event registration worth seventy-five dollars per person (\$75.00) is therefore very much in the public interest under the circumstances set forth above.

Therefore, it is my opinion that it is consistent with the public interest for the referenced INDOT personnel, to attend the 6th Annual WTS Awards Gala on November 14, 2024, and to receive the item of value specified above, even though payment for this item is being made by RQAW|DCCM, an entity that has a business relationship with INDOT. Based on this finding, I am hereby waiving application of 42 IAC 1-5-1 (a) to allow INDOT employees, Debbie Calder, Jess K. Miller, Kaitlyn Taylor, Destiny Golladay, Chaila Jordan, and Josie Craine to accept registration fees for the 6th Annual WTS Awards Gala pursuant to the details set forth herein.

If you need additional information or have any questions about this letter, please feel free to contact me at (317) 719-6624 or msteele@indot.in.gov.

Sincerely,

Michele Steele

Michele Steele
Ethics Officer
Indiana Department of Transportation