

QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY ETHICS COMMISSION



*Queen
Anne's
County*

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Advisory Opinion from November 16, 2009

The Ethics Commission reviewed a request for an advisory opinion regarding a potential conflict of interest for gifts to three county employees who work at the County airport. The Commission considered the facts that you provided regarding whether the receipt of gift certificates would be a conflict of interest.

The Commission determined that there would be a violation of the County Public Ethics Law, specifically §8-12 C (2), which prohibits accepting a gift that, under the circumstances, could give rise to "an appearance of impairing the impartiality and independent judgment of the employee receiving the gift." The Commission applied the following standard for whether the circumstances presented an "appearance" of a conflict of interest: Whether, under the circumstances, an informed member of the public could reasonably believe that there is a conflict of interest. Under those facts, the Ethics commission found that the receipt of the gift certificates by these employees would be a violation of the Ethics law; therefore, the gift certificates may not be accepted.

Advisory Opinion 09-14