

June 24, 1999
Re: IO-99-117

You inquired whether you may accept compensated secondary employment as a speaker with a public relations firm that will be marketing your services throughout the country to various corporations, and other entities. You were sent a questionnaire to establish your "profile" for a promotional package. You would receive compensation from the organizations that hire you to speak, and you would pay a percentage of your compensation to the firm.

The limitations imposed upon this secondary employment by §3-105 of the Public Ethics Law would prevent your engagement to speak by any entity that is negotiating or has entered into a contract with the county that would involve the participation of your agency (the Office of the County Executive, or more specifically, the governmental relations office). §3-105(b)(1). Also, a speaking engagement with any entity that is lobbying the executive branch could raise impairment of judgment issues under §3-105(b)(2). If you can avoid these types of speaking engagements, there will be no problem with your proposed employment as a speaker.

You should also be aware of the provisions of §3-104, which prohibits an employee from using the prestige, title, or authority of the office or position for the benefit of the employee or another. This provision would prevent both you and the public relations firm marketing your services from using your title in any advertising or promotional packaging. You cannot be engaged to speak about your official duties, or any other subject involving your official activities with Anne Arundel County.

Thank you for your inquiry. If you have any other questions, call any time.

Sincerely,

Betsy K. Dawson
Executive Director