

March 13, 2006

By electronic and interoffice mail

Re: IO-06-14

You inquired whether you may continue to teach college environmental science classes as an adjunct instructor while you are also employed with the county in the waste management services division of the department of public works. The ethics commission advises that you may engage in this secondary employment.

Your current position with the county involves overseeing the county's waste management practices to ensure compliance with all environmental regulations. Prior to joining the county in early 2006, you received a post-graduate degree in environmental sciences and policy, and you have had significant work experience in the environmental sciences field in and around the state of Maryland.

In the absence of a contractual relationship between the schools where you would teach and the Anne Arundel County government, there are no secondary employment provisions that would be applicable to prohibit your teaching activities. The only relevant provision of the ethics law would be §5-107, which prohibits the use of the prestige of your county position for your private gain.

In [AO-01-136](#), the ethics commission set out guidelines for determining when an outside teaching job might constitute an improper use of the prestige of an employee's position. Quoting from a state ethics commission opinion, the commission said that, "more than common subject matter or expertise is necessary for an outside activity to be viewed as directly and immediately related to an official's duties." Obviously, most of what you plan to teach is information you acquired prior to coming to work for the county, and relates to issues that encompass far more than your specific job duties.

For these reasons, and following the guidelines and limitations set out in the above-cited opinion, the ethics commission concludes that you may continue to teach environmental science classes while you are employed as the county's solid waste disposal and maintenance manager. As indicated in that opinion, you may not use your official county title in the educational institution's literature to promote the classes you teach.

Thank you for your inquiry.

Sincerely,

Betsy K. Dawson
Executive Director