

December 13, 2006

Sent By Electronic and Interoffice Mail

Re: IO-06-96

You inquired whether the ethics law would permit the county executive to accept the invitation of the Northern Anne Arundel County Chamber of Commerce to attend its annual dinner which will coincide with its 60th anniversary. The ethics commission advises that the county executive may only accept this invitation if he or the county pays the \$65 charge associated with this event. The ethics law § 7-5-106 permits elected officials to accept free admission only to charitable, cultural, or political events. As a business event, it cannot be categorized as charitable, cultural, or political in nature. The Northern Anne Arundel County Chamber of Commerce also advised that this same invitation is sent to all elected officials as a regular practice and that those who attend generally pay their own way to this event. Since the cost of this dinner exceeds \$25, it cannot be accepted as a permitted exception for meals and beverages of moderate value.

Anne Arundel County Ethics Commission

By: _____
Betsy K. Dawson, Executive Director