



**ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY  
ETHICS COMMISSION**

April 2, 2009

*By Electronic Mail Only*

Re: AO-09-20

You inquired whether your department may hold a kick-off press event for the county's spring recycling promotion during which press event you would mention the support being offered to this program event by a soft-drink company. This company has offered to donate up to \$5,000 worth of signs and banners to advertise the county's recycling effort. The ethics commission advises that you may acknowledge the support of this company at the media event, and if you so choose, on the banners and signs as well.

The ethics issue involved in this inquiry, §7-5-104(a), has been consistently interpreted by the ethics commission as prohibiting the county from endorsing or promoting commercial activities. See, [AO-08-24](#), [AO-98-92](#), and [IO-05-61](#). In this situation, you will not be promoting commercial activities; on the contrary, the private entities will be supporting and promoting county activities. The entity in question has, without being solicited, offered to provide financial support to promote the county's recycling program. As long as the extent of the county's expression of gratitude is limited to mentioning the support given by the entity and does not include any type of endorsement of its products, there will be no ethics issue.

Thank you for your inquiry. Please call if you have any questions.

The Anne Arundel County Ethics Commission