

UNITED STATES OFFICE OF
GOVERNMENT ETHICS



May 30, 2019

The Honorable John Kennedy
Chairman
Subcommittee on Financial Services
and General Government
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
416 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Christopher Coons
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Financial Services
and General Government
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
218 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Kennedy and Ranking Member Coons:

This responds to your letter dated May 1, 2019, which requests information from agencies within the subcommittee's jurisdiction regarding spending on premium-class airline tickets for government employees. Specifically, your letter requests that the U.S. Office of Government Ethics (OGE) identify each instance of non-coach-class airline travel in fiscal years 2017-2019 and describe OGE's policies to ensure compliance with specific restrictions¹ on such travel.

In response to your request for specific information regarding each instance of an OGE employee using non-coach-class airline travel (questions 3(a)-(d)), no OGE employee took such travel. OGE is a careful steward of taxpayer resources and expends few resources for very limited, mission-critical travel.²

In response to your request for OGE's policies for ensuring compliance with the referenced restrictions on premium-class airline travel (questions 1 and 2), OGE has a detailed travel policy, required form for requests for non-coach-class airline travel, and a delegation of authority from the Director of OGE specifying authority and controls on the approval of travel by agency employees. Specifically, this policy, form, and delegation require the Deputy Director for Compliance to ensure compliance with all statutory and regulatory requirements for travel and to verify and approve all non-coach-class airline travel in compliance with restrictions on

¹ 41 C.F.R. §§ 301-10.121-10.125; *see also* Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Act, 2019, Pub. L. 116-6, div. D, sec. 632.

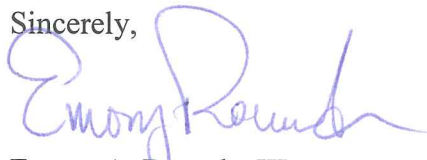
² OGE's entire agency-wide travel expenditures during each of the last three fiscal years did not exceed \$7,000 and averaged less than \$4,000 per year.



such travel. As an additional control, the OGE Budget Officer is required to examine and approve all travel authorizations prior to the commitment of funds. Together, these OGE policies and procedures establish strong internal controls for non-coach-class airline travel and ensure compliance with restrictions on premium-class airline travel.

If you require additional information or have questions, please contact OGE's Chief of Staff, Shelley K. Finlayson, at 202-482-9314.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Emory Rounds", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Emory A. Rounds, III
Director