



Washington, D.C. 20548

## Decision

B-256156

June 15, 1994

Mr. James Q. Kohler, Jr.  
Chief, Financial Operations Division  
Office of the Comptroller  
U.S. Information Agency  
Washington, D.C. 20547

Dear Mr. Kohler:

This is in response to your letter, dated December 27, 1993, concerning the claim of Ms. Nancy Lang for \$265.85.

You advise that in October 1992 Ms. Nancy Lang, a Special Events Coordinator of the United States Information Agency (USIA), made reservations for seven other employees and herself to attend a conference to be held in Charlottesville, Virginia, from October 15 through 19, 1992. At the time that arrangements had to be made for accommodations, the names of the actual employees who would attend were not known, and Ms. Lang used her Diner's Club Card to guarantee the reservations. Ms. Lang attempted to make reservations at the closest hotel or motel with the lodging cost within the government per diem allowance rate.

In the instant case, the Cavalier Inn in Charlottesville was the closest motel, but Ms. Lang was informed that it could only accommodate three employees on the last two nights of the conference, October 18 and 19, 1992. Ms. Lang then contacted the Comfort Inn to make reservations for five rooms for October 18 and 19, 1992. When Ms. Lang and the other employees arrived at the Cavalier Inn on October 15, 1992, she was informed that the whole group could be accommodated for the entire stay. After being advised of this, Ms. Lang called the Comfort Inn and canceled the reservations for the nights of October 18 and 19, 1992, and received a cancellation number which she wrote down. However, when Ms. Lang received her Diner's Club Card bill, the Comfort Inn had charged her account for the rooms reserved for October 18, 1992.

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<sup>1</sup>Ms. Lang was only charged for the first night because the motel was able to rent the rooms for the second night.

Ms. Lang contacted the Comfort Inn to get the charge removed but was informed that there was no record of the reservations being canceled. Unfortunately, Ms. Lang was not able to locate the cancellation number given to her. Ms. Lang was unable to resolve this problem and has had to pay the Diner's Club bill of \$265.85.

In Gary L. Fryman, B-252195, July 26, 1993, we held that the Army may reimburse an employee whose credit card account was used in lieu of a cash deposit to assure room availability for an Army-sponsored dinner for visiting dignitaries. When the dinner reservations had to be canceled at the last moment, the restaurant assessed a cancellation charge against the employee's account and the agency became liable to pay the forfeited deposit. Since Mr. Fryman actually had to pay the forfeited deposit through the charge against his Diner's Club account, we concluded that the Army may reimburse him.

You were informed by an agency official that, as a Special Events Coordinator, Ms. Lang was authorized to make reservations on behalf of USIA well in advance to ensure that accommodations are available when the program staff arrive. Since the reservations made by Ms. Lang in her official capacity on behalf of USIA were canceled, the USIA became liable for the canceled reservations.

Thus, on the basis of Gary L. Fryman, B-252195, supra, USIA may reimburse Ms. Lang in the amount of \$265.85 for the cost of the unused lodging.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Seymour Efros  
for Robert P. Murphy  
Acting General Counsel