

DECISION



**THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL
OF THE UNITED STATES**
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20548

60399

FILE:

B-182499

DATE: JAN 19 1976

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MATTER OF:

Richard G. Kaiser - Travel expenses

DIGEST:

Employee authorized to travel from Missoula, Montana, location while on annual leave, to Seattle, Washington, and Portland, Oregon, and return and who has been reimbursed for travel expenses in connection therewith may not be allowed additional reimbursement for constructive travel from his official duty station, Washington, D.C., to Seattle and Portland and return.

This action is in response to a request for an advance decision by an authorized certifying officer of the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior whether he may certify for payment the voucher of Mr. Richard G. Kaiser, an employee of the Fish and Wildlife Service in the amount of \$297.93, claimed as travel expenses in connection with an official trip to Portland, Oregon, and Seattle, Washington, on July 22 and 23, 1974.

The information furnished shows that on July 5, 1974, a request was made to the Associate Director, Fish and Wildlife Management, Washington, D.C., for Mr. Kaiser's presence at the initial review of the architect/engineer's presentation of the design for the Makah National Fish Hatchery in Washington, scheduled for the latter part of July 1974. Mr. Kaiser, with his official duty station at Washington, D.C., indicated that he would be available during the week of July 21, 1974, for whatever time was necessary. He also indicated at that time that he would be on annual leave in Montana commencing the week of July 15, 1974. Accordingly, by Travel Authorization No. 0003, dated July 8, 1974, and signed by Mr. Kaiser, authorization was given for Mr. Kaiser's travel by common carrier from Missoula, Montana, where he was on vacation to Portland, Oregon, and return between July 21 and 23, 1974. On July 11, 1974, this travel authorization was amended to permit Mr. Kaiser to also travel to Seattle, Washington, on official business during this same period.

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On August 5, 1974, Mr. Kaiser submitted a voucher in the amount of \$63.10 for the travel performed. A Schedule of Expenses and Accounts Claimed filed in connection with this voucher indicates that within the time period of July 22 and 23, 1974, Mr. Kaiser traveled at Government expense from Missoula to Seattle and Portland and returned to Missoula.

Thereafter, on September 6, 1974, Mr. Kaiser submitted an additional voucher and Schedule of Expenses and Amounts Claimed in the amount of \$297.93. In an accompanying memorandum Mr. Kaiser indicates that this voucher represents constructive travel expenses from his official duty station, Washington, D.C., to Seattle and Portland and return between July 21, 1974, and July 24, 1974. With respect to his claim for \$297.93 the memorandum from Mr. Kaiser states, in part, as follows:

"I feel that since I would have performed this trip regardless of my visit in Montana that I should really be entitled to reimbursement for expenses from Washington, D.C., in the amount not to exceed lowest cost by common carrier."

Federal Travel Regulations (FFHR 101-7) para. 1-1.4 (May 1973), promulgated pursuant to 5 U.S.C. §5707 (1970) provides, in part, as follows:

"Authority for travel. Except as otherwise provided by law, all travel shall be either authorized or approved by the head of the agency or by an official to whom such authority has been delegated. * * *"

The record shows that Mr. Kaiser was authorized to travel from Missoula his location while on annual leave, to Portland and Seattle and return. There was no authorization, nor was there any obligation on the part of the Government, to either authorize or reimburse Mr. Kaiser for travel from his official duty station. The general rule is that when an employee proceeds to a point away from his official duty station on annual leave he assumes the obligation of returning himself thereto at his own expense. 11 Comp. Gen. 336 (1932); 16 id. 164 (1936); id. 481 (1936); 19 id. 977 (1940); 30 id. 443 (1951); B-141905, February 23, 1950.

B-182499

Since there was no added expense incurred by Mr. Kaiser, other than the travel from Missoula, to Portland, to Seattle, and return for which he has been reimbursed in returning to the point where he interrupted his leave to perform temporary duty, the voucher may not be certified for payment. The papers transmitted with your letter of October 21, 1974, are returned herewith as requested.

R. F. KELLER

Deputy Comptroller General
of the United States