

Journalists face own conflicts of interest challenges in covering controversial science

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis.

In my recent article for [BuzzFeed](#) there is a line about my own potential conflicts of interest (COIs).

I was invited to attend [the Biotech Literacy Project Boot Camp conference] and to speak, and offered a \$2,000 honorarium, as well as expenses. I was told that funds from UC Davis, USDA, state money, and the Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO) would provide the honorarium.

Now, BIO is an industry group. I decided that I wouldn't take the honorarium, because I cover GMOs as a journalist.

Could I accept the travel money? Or should I skip the conference?

I asked about half a dozen journalists I know. They had a range of opinions, but the one that resonated to me most was this: Don't take the honorarium. Do consider the travel money. And if you ever write about the conference: Disclose that money clearly.

None of us are capable of truly seeing our own potential COIs, human psychology is messy.

So, my advice is to ask where money is coming from. Think about how others might perceive it. Talk to your editors and your peers.

And disclose, disclose, disclose.

Read full, original post: [On Science Journalism and Conflicts-of-Interest](#)