

**Council on Environmental Quality  
2012 Annual FOIA Report  
October 1, 2011 - September 30, 2012**

**I. BASIC INFORMATION REGARDING REPORT**

- A. Provide name, title, address, and telephone number of person(s) to be contacted with questions about the Report.

**Diana A. Csank  
FOIA Public Liaison  
Council on Environmental Quality  
722 Jackson Place, NW  
Washington, DC 20503  
Telephone number: (202) 395-5750, (202) 456-6224  
Fax number: (202) 456-0753  
E-Mail: [efoia@ceq.eop.gov](mailto:efoia@ceq.eop.gov)**

- B. Provide an electronic link for access to the Report on the agency Web site.

**<http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ceq>**

- C. Explain how to obtain a copy of the report in paper form.

**Contact CEQ's FOIA Public Liaison at the address, telephone number, or e-mail address listed above.**

**II. MAKING A FOIA REQUEST**

- A. Names, addresses, and telephone numbers of all individual agency components and offices that receive FOIA requests.

**Office of the General Counsel  
Council on Environmental Quality  
722 Jackson Place, NW  
Washington, DC 20503  
Telephone number: (202) 395-5750**

**Heightened security measures in force may delay mail delivery; therefore, FOIA correspondence should be sent by email, [efoia@ceq.eop.gov](mailto:efoia@ceq.eop.gov), or fax, (202) 456-0753.**

- C. Brief description of why some requests are not granted.

**CEQ does not grant requests when CEQ does not find any responsive documents or when the request is for another agency's records.**

### III. ACRONYMS, DEFINITIONS, AND EXEMPTIONS

#### 1. Agency-specific acronyms or other terms:

- a. **Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ);**
- b. **Environmental Assessment (EA);**
- c. **Environmental Impact Statement (EIS);**
- d. **Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI); and**
- e. **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).**

#### 2. Definitions of terms used in this Report:

- a. **Administrative Appeal**—a request asking a Federal agency to review at a higher administrative level a FOIA determination made by the agency at the initial request level.
- b. **Average Number**—the number obtained by dividing the sum of a group of numbers by the quantity of numbers in the group. For example, of 3, 7, and 14, the average number is 8.
- c. **Backlog**—the number of requests or administrative appeals that are pending at the agency at the end of the fiscal year that are beyond the statutory time period for a response.
- d. **Component**—for agencies that process requests on a decentralized basis, a “component” is an entity, also sometimes referred to as an Office, Division, Bureau, Center, or Directorate, within the agency that processes FOIA requests. The FOIA requires that agencies include in their Annual FOIA Report data for both the agency overall and for each principal component of the agency.
- e. **Consultation**—the procedure whereby the agency responding to a FOIA request first forwards a record to another agency for its review because that other agency has an interest in the document. Once the agency in receipt of the consultation finishes its review of the record, it responds back to the agency that forwarded it. That agency, in turn, will then respond to the FOIA requester.
- f. **Exemption 3 Statute**—a Federal statute that exempts information from disclosure and which the agency relies on to withhold information under subsection (b)(3) of the FOIA.
- g. **FOIA request**—a FOIA request is generally a request to a Federal agency for access to agency records concerning another person; i.e., a “third-party” request, or concerning an organization, or a particular topic of interest. FOIA requests also include requests made by requesters seeking records concerning themselves; i.e., “first-party” requests) when

those requesters are not subject to the Privacy Act, such as non-US citizens. Moreover, because all first-party requesters should be afforded the benefit of both the access provisions of the FOIA as well as those of the Privacy Act, FOIA requests also include any first-party requests where an agency determines that it must search beyond its Privacy Act “systems of records” or where a Privacy Act exemption applies, and the agency looks to FOIA to afford the greatest possible access. All requests which require the agency to utilize the FOIA in responding to the requester are included in this report.

Additionally, a FOIA request includes records referred to the agency for processing and direct response to the requester. It does not, however, include records for which the agency has received a consultation from another agency. (Consultations are reported separately in Section XII of this Report.)

- h. **Full Grant**—an agency decision to disclose all records in full in response to a FOIA request.
- i. **Full Denial**—an agency decision not to release any records in response to a FOIA request because the records are exempt in their entirety under one or more of the FOIA exemptions, or because of a procedural reason, such as when no records could be located.
- j. **Median Number**—the middle, not the average, number. For example, of 3, 7, and 14, the median number is 7.
- k. **Multi-Track Processing**—a system in which simple requests requiring relatively minimal review are placed in one processing track and more voluminous and complex requests are placed in one or more other tracks. Requests granted expedited processing are placed in yet another track. Requests in each track are processed on a first in/first out basis.
  - i. **Expedited Processing**—an agency will process a FOIA request on an expedited basis when a requester satisfies the requirements for expedited processing as set forth in the statute and in agency regulations.
  - ii. **Simple Request**—a FOIA request that an agency using multi-track processing places in its fastest (non-expedited) track based on the low volume and/or simplicity of the records requested.
  - iii. **Complex Request**—A FOIA request that an agency using multi-track processing places in a slower track based on the high volume and/or complexity of the records requested.
- l. **Partial Grant/Partial Denial**—in response to a FOIA request, an agency decision to disclose portions of the records and to withhold other portions that are exempt under the FOIA, or to otherwise deny a portion of the request for a procedural reason.

- m. **Pending Request or Pending Administrative Appeal**—a request for records which reasonably describes such records and is made in accordance with published rules stating the time, place, fees (if any) and procedures to be followed.
  - n. **Perfect Request**—a request for records which reasonably describes such records and is made in accordance with published rules stating the time, place, fees (if any) and procedures to be followed.
  - o. **Processed Request or Processed Administrative Appeal**—a request or administrative appeal for which an agency has taken final action in all respects.
  - p. **Range in Number of Days**—the lowest and highest number of days to process requests or administrative appeals.
  - q. **Time Limits**—the time period in the statute for an agency to respond to a FOIA request (ordinarily twenty working days from receipt of a perfected FOIA request).
3. Descriptions of the nine FOIA Exemptions
- a. **Exemption 1:** Classified national defense and foreign relations information.
  - b. **Exemption 2:** Internal agency rules and practices.
  - c. **Exemption 3:** Information that is prohibited from disclosure by another Federal law.
  - d. **Exemption 4:** Trade secrets and other confidential business information.
  - e. **Exemption 5:** Inter or intra-agency communications that are protected by legal privileges.
  - f. **Exemption 6:** Information involving matters of personal privacy.
  - g. **Exemption 7:** Information compiled for law enforcement purposes, to the extent that the production of those records (A) could reasonably be expected to interfere with enforcement proceedings, (B) would deprive a person of a right to a fair trial or an impartial adjudication, (C) could reasonably be expected to constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy, (D) could reasonably be expected to disclose the identity of a confidential source, (E) would disclose techniques and procedures for law enforcement investigations or prosecutions, or would disclose guidelines for law investigations or prosecutions, or (F) could reasonably be expected to endanger the life or physical safety of any individual.
  - h. **Exemption 8:** Information relating to the supervision of financial institutions.
  - i. **Exemption 9:** geological information on wells.

**IV. Exemption 3 Statutes**

Not applicable; CEQ FOIA responses did not rely on any exemption 3 statutes in FY12.

**V. FOIA Requests**

A. Received, Processed and Pending FOIA Requests

No. pending since start of FY12	No. received in FY12	No. processed in FY12	No. pending as of end of FY12
21*	50	58	13

\*At the end of FY11, CEQ settled FOIA litigation, and the records at issue in the litigation are responsive to three pending requests, in addition to the litigated request. Per the settlement agreement, the National Archives and Records Administration has custody of the records at issue and will make them available pursuant to NARA’s FOIA disclosure procedures. Accordingly, CEQ is not including any of these requests in this FY12 report.

B. (1) Disposition of FOIA Requests—All Processed Requests

Full grant	Partial grant/partial denial	Full denial based on exemptions	Number of Full Denials Based on Reasons Other than Exemptions									Ttl
			No Record	All records referred to another agency	With-Drawn request	Fee-related reason	Records not reasonably described	Improper request (other reasons)	Not agency record	Duplicate request	Other	
10	11	1	24	1	9	0	0	1	1	0	0	58

B. (2) Disposition of FOIA Requests—“Other” Reasons for “Full Denials Based on Reasons other than Exemptions” from Section V, B (1) Chart

Description of “other” reasons for full denials from chart B (1) and number of times those reasons were relied upon	Total
<b>TOTAL</b>	N/A

B. (3) Disposition of FOIA Requests—Number of Times Exemptions Applied\*

Ex. 1	Ex. 2	Ex. 3	Ex. 4	Ex. 5	Ex. 6	Ex. 7(A)	Ex. 7(B)	Ex. 7(C)	Ex.7 (D)	Ex. 7(E)	Ex. 7(f)	Ex. 8	Ex. 9
0	0	0	0	5	12	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0

**VI. ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS OF INITIAL DETERMINATIONS OF FOIA**

A. Received, Processed, and Pending Administrative Appeals

Number of Appeals	Number of Appeals	Number of Appeals	Number of Appeals
-------------------	-------------------	-------------------	-------------------

Pending at Start of Fiscal Year	Received in Fiscal Year	Processed in Fiscal Year	Pending as of End of Fiscal Year
0	1	1	0

B. Disposition of Administrative Appeals—All Processed Appeals

Number Affirmed on Appeal	Number Partially Affirmed, Partially Reversed /Remanded on Appeal	Number Completely Reversed/Remanded on Appeal	Number of Appeals Closed for Other Reasons	TOTAL
0	1	0	0	1

C. (1) Reasons for Denial on Appeal—Number of Times Exemptions Applied

Ex. 1	Ex. 2	Ex. 3	Ex. 4	Ex. 5	Ex. 6	Ex. 7	Ex. 7(A)	Ex. 7(B)	Ex. 7 (C)	Ex. 7 (D)	Ex. 7 (E)	Ex. 8	Ex. 9
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

C. (2) Reasons for Denial of Appeal—Reasons Other than Exemptions

No records	Records referred at initial request level	Request withdrawn	Fee-Related	Records not reasonably described	Improper request for other reasons	Not agency record	Duplicate request or appeal	Request In Litigation	Appeal based solely on denial of request for expedited processing	Other
0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0

C. (3) Reasons for Denial on Appeal

<b>Description of “other” reasons for denial on appeal from Chart C (2) and number of times reasons were relied upon</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
N/A	N/A

C. (4) Response Time for Administrative Appeals

<b>Median # of Days</b>	<b>Average # of Days</b>	<b>Lowest # of Days</b>	<b>Highest # of Days</b>
40	40	40	40

C. (5) Ten Oldest Pending Administrative Appeals

	<b>10<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>9<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>8<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>7<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>6<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>5<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>Oldest</b>
<b>Date of Receipt of 10</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

<b>Oldest Appeals</b>										
<b>Number of Days Pending</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

**VII. FOIA REQUESTS: RESPONSE TIME FOR PROCESSED AND PENDING REQUESTS**

A. Processed Requests—response time for all processed perfected requests

<i>Response Time For All Processed Perfected Requests</i>				
	<b>Median # of Days</b>	<b>Average # of Days</b>	<b>Lowest # of Days</b>	<b>Highest # of Days</b>
<b>Simple</b>	24	26	1	68
<b>Complex</b>	90	93	8	173
<b>Expedited</b>	76	76	28	124

B. Processed Requests—response time for perfected requests with information granted

<i>Response Time For Perfected Requests With Information Granted</i>				
	<b>Median # of Days</b>	<b>Average # of Days</b>	<b>Lowest # of Days</b>	<b>Highest # of Days</b>
<b>Simple</b>	25	23	1	68
<b>Complex</b>	122	123	69	173
<b>Expedited</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A



C. Processed Requests—Response Time in Day Increments

<i>Number of Processed Requests</i>	<b>1-20</b>	<b>21-40</b>	<b>41-60</b>	<b>61-80</b>	<b>81-100</b>	<b>101-120</b>	<b>121-140</b>	<b>141-160</b>	<b>161-180</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>Simple Requests</b>	8	10	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	21
<b>Complex Requests</b>	2	2	2	2	6	2	1	3	3	23
<b>Requests Granted Expedited Processing</b>	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2

D. Pending Requests—All Perfected Requests

<i>Pending Requests - All Perfected Requests</i>			
	<b>Number of Requests</b>	<b>Median # of Days</b>	<b>Average # of Days</b>
<b>Simple</b>	0	N/A	N/A
<b>Complex</b>	12	231	237.6
<b>Expedited</b>	0	0	0

E. Pending Requests—Ten Oldest Pending Perfected Requests

	<b>10<sup>th</sup> Oldest</b>	<b>9<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>8<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>7<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>6<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>5<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>Oldest</b>
<b>Date</b>	4/11/12	3/9/12	2/14/12	11/7/11	10/26/11	8/22/11	8/4/11	7/27/11	9/13/10	8/13/10
<b># of Days</b>	120	143	160	227	235	281	293	299	519	539

## VIII. REQUESTS FOR EXPEDITED PROCESSING AND FOR FEE WAIVER

### A. Requests for Expedited Processing

Number Granted	Number Denied	Median Number of Days to Adjudicate	Average # of Days to Adjudicate	Number Adjudicated Within 10 Calendar Days
2	0	6.5	6.5	2

### B. Requests for Fee Waiver

Number Granted	Number Denied	Median Number of Days to Adjudicate	Average Number of Days to Adjudicate
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

\*CEQ did not charge fees for fiscal year 2012 FOIA requests.

## IX. FOIA PERSONNEL AND COSTS

PERSONNEL			COSTS		
Number of Full-time FOIA staff	Number of Equivalent Full-time FOIA Staff	Total Number Full-time FOIA Staff	Processing Costs	Litigation-related Costs	Total Costs
0	.75	.75	\$43,000.00	0	\$43,000.00

## X. FEES COLLECTED FOR PROCESSING REQUESTS

A. Total amount of fees collected by agency for processing requests

B. Percentage of total costs

Total amount of fees collected	Percentage of total costs
00.00	00.00

## XI. FOIA REGULATIONS

For general information about CEQ, visit [www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ceq](http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ceq). CEQ revised its FOIA regulations. The revised regulations became effective September 10, 2010 and are available at [www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ceq/foia/regulations](http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ceq/foia/regulations).

## XII. BACKLOGS, CONSULTATIONS, AND COMPARISONS

### A. Backlogs of FOIA Requests and Administrative Appeals

Number of Backlogged Requests as of End of Fiscal Year	Number of Backlogged Appeals as of End of Fiscal Year
11	N/A

B. Consultations on FOIA Requests—Received, Processed, and Pending Consultations

<b>Number of Consultations Received from Other Agencies that were Pending at CEQ as of Start of Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Number of Consultations Received from Other Agencies During the Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Number of Consultations Received from Other Agencies that Were Processed by CEQ During the Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Number of Consultations Received from Other Agencies that were Pending at CEQ as of End of Fiscal Year</b>
5	10	13	2

C. Consultations on FOIA Requests—Ten Oldest Received from Other Agencies Pending at CEQ

<b>10<sup>th</sup> Oldest and # of Days Pending</b>	<b>9<sup>th</sup> N/A</b>	<b>8<sup>th</sup> N/A</b>	<b>7<sup>th</sup> N/A</b>	<b>6<sup>th</sup> N/A</b>	<b>5<sup>th</sup> N/A</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> N/A</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> N/A</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> N/A</b>	<b>Oldest and # of Days Pending</b>
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	7/3/12	1/26/12
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	62	173

D. Comparison of Numbers of Requests from Previous and Current Annual Report—Requests Received, Process, and Backlogged

<b>Number of requests received</b>		<b>Number of requests processed</b>	
<b>Number received during fiscal year from last year's annual report</b>	<b>Number received during fiscal year from current annual report</b>	<b>Number processed during fiscal year from last year's annual report</b>	<b>Number processed during fiscal year from current annual report</b>
41	50	23	58

<b>Backlogged Requests</b>	
<b>Number of backlogged requests as of end of the fiscal year from previous annual report</b>	<b>Number of backlogged requests as of end of the fiscal year from current annual report</b>
14	11

E. Comparison of Numbers of Administrative Appeals from Previous and Current Annual Report—Appeals Received, Processed, and Backlogged

<b>Number of appeals received</b>		<b>Number of appeals processed</b>	
<b>Number received during fiscal year from last year's annual report</b>	<b>Number received during fiscal year from current annual report</b>	<b>Number process during fiscal year from last year's annual report</b>	<b>Number processed during fiscal year from current annual report</b>
0	1	0	1

<b>Backlogged appeals</b>	
<b>Number of backlogged appeals as of the end of the fiscal year from previous annual report</b>	<b>Number of backlogged appeals as of end of the fiscal year from current annual report</b>
0	0