

Council on Environmental Quality

§ 1515.5

any of these materials at the Council's office during the hours stated below in §1515.3(f).

§ 1515.3 How is CEQ organized?

(a) The Council is made up of three members appointed by the President and subject to approval by the Senate. One member is designated as chairman by the President. All three serve in a full-time capacity.

(b) The National Environmental Policy Act and the Environmental Quality Improvement Act give the Council the authority to hire any officers and staff that may be necessary to carry out responsibilities and functions specified in these two Acts. Also, the use of consultants and experts is permitted.

(c) In addition to the three members, the Council has program and legal staff.

(d) The Council has no field or regional offices.

(e) The Council has a public affairs office which is responsible for providing information to the general public, the Congress, and the press. If you are interested in general information about the Council or have questions about the Council's recent activities or policy positions, you should call this office at (202) 633-7005 or write to the "Public Affairs Office" of the Council at the address given in the next paragraph.

NOTE: The CEQ public affairs office can respond fully and promptly to most questions you may have; the Council suggests that the Freedom of Information Act procedures be used when you are seeking a specific document and have had difficulty obtaining it.

(f) The Council is located at 722 Jackson Place NW., Washington, DC 20006. Office hours are 9-5:30, Monday through Friday, except legal holidays. If you wish to meet with any of the staff, please write or phone ahead for an appointment. The main number is 202-633-7027.

PROCEDURES FOR REQUESTING RECORDS

§ 1515.5 How to make a Freedom of Information Act request.

(a) The Chairman has appointed a Freedom of Information Officer who will be responsible for overseeing the Council's administration of the Freedom of Information Act and for receiving,

routing, and overseeing the processing of all Freedom of Information requests. The Chairman has also appointed an Appeals Officer who is responsible for processing any appeals.

(b) *Requesting information from the Council.* (1) When you make a Freedom of Information Act request to the Council, the Freedom of Information Officer shall decide how to respond to—or "make an initial determination on"—your request within 10 working days from the date the Officer receives the request. The Freedom of Information Officer will then provide you with written notification of the determination.

(2) You can make a Freedom of Information Act request by writing a letter which states that you are making a Freedom of Information Act request. Address your letter to:

Freedom of Information Officer, Council on Environmental Quality, Executive Office of the President, 722 Jackson Place NW., Washington, DC 20006.

(3) In your request you should identify the desired record or reasonably describe it. The request should be as specific as possible so that the item can be readily found. You should not make blanket requests, such as requests for "the entire file of" or "all materials relating to" a specified subject.

(4) The Council will make a reasonable effort to assist you in defining the request to eliminate extraneous and unwanted materials and to keep search and copying fees to a minimum. If you have budgetary constraints and anticipate that your request might be costly you may wish to indicate the maximum fee you are prepared to pay for acquiring the information. (See §1515.15(c) also.)

(5) The 10 day period for making a determination on a request will begin when the records requested are specified or reasonably identifiable.

(6) Despite its name, the Freedom of Information Act does not require a government agency to create or research information that you would like or that you may think the agency should have. The Act only requires that existing records be made available to the public.

§ 1515.10

40 CFR Ch. V (7-1-02 Edition)

(c) *Council's response to a request.* (1) Upon receipt of any request under the Act, the Freedom of Information Officer shall direct the request to the appropriate staff member at the Council, who will review the request and advise the Freedom of Information Officer as soon as possible.

(2) If it is appropriate to grant the request, the staff member will immediately collect the requested materials in order to accompany, wherever possible, the Freedom of Information Officer's letter notifying you of the decision.

(3) If your request is denied, in part or in full, the letter notifying you of the decision will be signed by the Freedom of Information Officer, and will include the names of any other individuals who participated in the decision. The letter will include the reasons for any denial and the procedure for filing an appeal.

(d) *Appeals.* (1) If you are not satisfied with the response you have received from the Freedom of Information Officer, you may ask the Council to reconsider the decision. You should explain what material you still wish to receive, and why you believe the Council should disclose this to you. This is called an "appeal." You must make your appeal within 45 days of the date on the letter which denied your request.

(2) You can make an appeal by writing a letter to:

FOIA Appeals Officer, Council on Environmental Quality, Executive Office of the President, 722 Jackson Place NW., Washington, DC 20006.

(3) Your letter should specify the records being requested and ask the Appeals Officer to review the determination made by the Freedom of Information Officer. The letter should explain the basis for the appeal.

(4) The Appeals Officer shall decide the appeal—or "make a final determination"—within 20 working days from the date the Officer receives the appeal. The Appeals Officer (or designee) will send you a letter informing you of the decision as soon as it is made. If the Appeals Officer denies your request, in part or in whole, the letter will also notify you of the provisions for judicial review and the names

of any persons who participated in the final determination of the appeal.

(e) *Extending the Council's time to respond.* In unusual circumstances, the time limits for response to your request (paragraphs (b) and (d) of this section) may be extended by the Council for not more than 10 working days. Extensions may be granted by the Freedom of Information Officer in the case of initial requests and by the Appeals Officer in the case of any appeals. The extension period may be split between the initial request and the appeal but may not exceed 10 working days overall. Any extension will be made or confirmed to you in writing and will set forth the reasons for the extension and the date that the final determination is expected. The term "unusual circumstances" means:

(i) The need to search for and collect the requested records from * * * establishments that are separate from the office processing the request;

(ii) The need to search for, collect, and appropriately examine a voluminous amount of separate and distinct records which are demanded in a single request; or

(iii) The need for consultation, which shall be conducted with all practicable speed, with another agency having a substantial interest in the determination of the request or among two or more components of the agency having substantial subject-matter interest therein.

(5 U.S.C. 552(a)(6)(B))

AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION

§ 1515.10 What information is available, and how can it be obtained?

(a) When a request for information has been approved, in whole or in part, you may make an appointment to inspect or copy the materials requested during regular business hours by writing or telephoning the Freedom of Information Officer at the address or phone number given in § 1515.3(f). You may be charged reasonable fees for copying materials, as explained by § 1515.15. The Council on Environmental Quality will permit copying of any available material but will reserve the right to limit the number of copies