(c) *Appeal of denial of expedited processing.* Any denial of a request for expedited processing may be appealed in accordance with the appeal procedure set forth in § 171.50.

(d) *Time limits.* The statutory time limit for responding to a FOIA request or to an appeal from a denial of a FOIA request is 20 days. In unusual circumstances, as defined in § 171.11(k), the time limits may be extended by the Information and Privacy Coordinator for not more than 10 days, excepting Saturdays, Sundays, or legal public holidays.

(e) *Multitrack processing.* The Department may use two or more processing tracks by distinguishing between simple and more complex requests based on the amount of work and/or time needed to process the request. The Department may provide requesters in a slower track an opportunity to limit the scope of their request in order to qualify for faster processing.

(f) *Form or format of response.* The Department shall provide requested records in any form or format sought by the requester if the record is readily reproducible in that form or format through reasonable efforts.

§ 171.13 Business information.

(a) Business information obtained by the Department from a submitter will be disclosed under the FOIA only in compliance with this section.

(b) *Definitions.* For purposes of this section:

(1) *Business information* means information obtained by the Department from a submitter that arguably may be exempt from disclosure as privileged or confidential under Exemption 4 of the FOIA.

(2) *Submitter* means any person or entity from which the Department obtains business information. The term includes corporations, partnerships, sole proprietorships; State, local, and tribal governments; and foreign governments.

(c) *Designation of business information.* A submitter of information will use good-faith efforts to designate, by appropriate markings, either at the time of submission or at a reasonable time thereafter, any portions of its submission that it considers exempt from disclosure under Exemption 4. These designations will expire ten years after the date of the submission unless the submitter requests, and provides justification for, a longer designation period.

(d) *Notice to submitters.* The Department shall provide a submitter with prompt written notice of a FOIA request or administrative appeal of a denial of such a request that seeks its information whenever required under paragraph (e) of this section, except as provided in paragraph (f) of this section, in order to give the submitter an opportunity to object to disclosure of any specified portion of that information. The notice shall either describe the information requested or include copies of the requested records or record portions containing the information.

(e) *When notice is required.* Notice shall be given to a submitter whenever:

(1) The information has been designated in good faith by the submitter as information considered protected from disclosure under Exemption 4; or

(2) The Department has reason to believe that the information may not be protected from disclosure under Exemption 4.

(f) *When notice is not required.* The notice requirements of paragraphs (d) and (e) of this section shall not apply if:

(1) The Department determines that the information should not be disclosed;

(2) The information lawfully has been published or has been officially made available to the public;

(3) Disclosure of the information is required by statute (other than the FOIA) or by a regulation issued in accordance with the requirements of Executive Order 12600; or

(4) The designation made by the submitter under paragraph (c) of this section appears obviously frivolous—except that, in such a case, the Department shall, within a reasonable time prior to a specified disclosure date, give the submitter written notice of any final decision to disclose the information.

(g) *Opportunity to object to disclosure.* The Department will allow a submitter a reasonable time to respond to the notice described in paragraph (d) of this

section and will specify that time period in the notice. If a submitter has any objection to disclosure, a detailed written statement in support of the objection must be submitted. The statement must specify all grounds for withholding any portion of the information under any exemption of the FOIA and, in the case of Exemption 4, it must show why the information is a trade secret or commercial or financial information that is privileged or confidential. In the event that a submitter fails to respond to the notice within the time specified in it, the submitter will be considered to have no objection to disclosure of the information. Information provided by a submitter under this paragraph may itself be subject to disclosure under the FOIA.

(h) *Notice of intent to disclose.* The Department shall consider a submitter's objections and specific grounds for nondisclosure in deciding whether to disclose business information. Whenever the Department decides to disclose business information over the objection of a submitter, it shall give the submitter written notice, which shall include:

(1) A statement of the reason why each of the submitter's disclosure objections was not sustained;

(2) A description of the information to be disclosed; and

(3) A specified disclosure date, which shall be a reasonable time subsequent to the notice.

(i) *Notice of lawsuit.* Whenever a requester files a lawsuit seeking to compel the disclosure of information, the Department shall promptly notify the submitter.

(j) *Notice to requester.* Whenever the Department provides a submitter with notice and an opportunity to object to disclosure under paragraph (d) of this section, the Department shall also notify the requester. Whenever the Department notifies a submitter of its intent to disclose requested information under paragraph (h) of this section, the Department shall also notify the requester. Whenever a submitter files a lawsuit seeking to prevent the disclosure of business information, the Department shall notify the requester.

§ 171.14 Fees to be charged—general.

The Department shall seek to charge fees that recoup the full allowable direct costs it incurs in processing a FOIA request. It shall use the most efficient and least costly methods to comply with requests for documents made under the FOIA. The Department will not charge fees to any requester, including commercial use requesters, if the cost of collecting a fee would be equal to or greater than the fee itself. With the exception of requesters seeking documents for a commercial use, the Department will provide the first two hours of search time and the first 100 pages of duplication without charge. By making a FOIA request, the requester shall be considered to have agreed to pay all applicable fees up to $25.00 unless a fee waiver has been granted.

(a) *Searches for responsive records.* If the Department estimates that the search costs will exceed $25.00, the requester shall be so notified. Such notice shall offer the requester the opportunity to confer with Department personnel with the object of reformulating the request to meet the requester's needs at a lower cost. The request shall not be processed further unless the requester agrees to pay the estimated fees. For both manual and computer searches, the Department shall charge the estimated direct cost of each search based on the average current salary rates of the categories of personnel doing the searches. Further information on search fees is available by clicking on "FOIA" at the Department's Web site at *http://www.state.gov* or directly at the FOIA home page at *http://foia.state.gov.*

(1) *Manual searches.* The Department will charge at the salary rate (*i.e.,* basic pay plus 16 percent of basic pay) of the employee making the search.

(2) *Computer searches.* The Department will charge at the actual direct cost of providing the service. This will include the cost of operating the central processing unit (CPU) for that portion of operating time that is directly attributable to searching for records responsive to a FOIA request and operator/programmer salary attributable to the search.