

Council on Environmental Quality

§ 1515.10

to grant it and will notify the requester of the decision. If a request for expedited treatment is granted, the request will be placed in the expedited processing track, given priority, and processed as soon as practicable. If a request for expedited processing is denied, any appeal of that decision will be acted on expeditiously.

§ 1515.8 Appeals.

(a) The requester may appeal an adverse determination, in any respect, to the CEQ FOIA Appeals Officer. Any appeal must be received by CEQ within 60 days of the date on the CEQ letter denying the request.

(b) Appeals must be in writing and may be sent via e-mail to: efoia@ceq.eop.gov. They may also be sent via facsimile to: (202) 456-0753 or via U.S. mail addressed to: FOIA Appeals Officer, Council on Environmental Quality, Executive Office of the President, 722 Jackson Place NW., Washington, DC 20503.

(c) The appeal letter should specify the records 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.

(d) The Appeals Officer will make a final determination on an appeal within 20 working days (excepting Saturdays, Sundays and Federal holidays) from the date CEQ receives the appeal. The Appeals Officer (or designee) will send a letter to the requester conveying the decision as soon as it is made. If an appeal is denied, in part or in whole, the letter will also include the provisions for judicial review.

§ 1515.9 Extending CEQ's time to respond.

(a) In unusual circumstances as defined in paragraph (c) of this section, the time limits for responding to a request (§§ 1515.6(a) and 1515.8(d)) may be extended by the Council for not more than 10 working days. Extensions may be granted by the CEQ FOIA 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. Extensions will be

confirmed in writing and set forth the reasons for the extension and the date that the final determination is expected.

(b) With respect to a request for which a written notice under this section extends the time limits prescribed under § 1515.6(a), the CEQ FOIA Officer will notify the requester, if the request cannot be processed within the time limit specified in § 1515.6(a) and provide an opportunity to limit the scope of the request, so that it may be processed within that time limit or an opportunity to arrange an alternative time frame for processing the request or a modified request. A requester's refusal to reasonably modify the request or arrange such an alternative time frame will be considered as a factor in determining whether exceptional circumstances exist for purposes of 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(6)(C). When CEQ reasonably believes that a requester, or a group of requesters, has submitted a request constituting a single request that would otherwise satisfy the unusual circumstances specified under this section, CEQ may aggregate those requests for purposes of this paragraph. Multiple requests involving unrelated matters will not be aggregated.

(c) The term "unusual circumstances" means:

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

(2) 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

(3) The need for consultation, which will 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.

AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION

§ 1515.10 Obtaining available information.

(a) When a request for information has been granted in whole or in part,

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CEQ will notify the requester in writing, inform the requester in the notice of any fee charged under §1515.11 and will disclose records to the requester promptly on payment of any applicable fees. The requested material may be made available on CEQ's Online FOIA Center, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ceq/foia>, and also in the form or format requested if the record is readily reproducible in that form or format with reasonable effort. When a form or format of the response is not requested, CEQ will respond in the form or format in which the document is most accessible to CEQ. "Readily reproducible" means, with respect to electronic format, that the requested record or records can be downloaded or transferred intact to a computer disk or other electronic medium using equipment currently in use by CEQ.

(b) Records disclosed in part will be marked or annotated to show information deleted, unless doing so would harm an interest protected by an applicable exemption. The location of the information deleted will also be indicated in the record, if technically feasible.

(c) The legislative history of the establishment of CEQ states that the Congress intended CEQ to be a confidential advisor to the President on matters of environmental policy. Therefore, members of the public should be aware that communications between CEQ and the President (including communications between their staff) may be confidential; they will usually fall, at a minimum, within Exemption 5 of the Act. The Freedom of Information Officer shall review each request to determine whether the record is exclusively factual or may have factual portions which may be reasonably segregated and made available to the requester. Furthermore, on the recommendation of the CEQ FOIA Officer or Appeals Officer, CEQ will consider the release of an entire record, even if it comes within an exemption or contains policy advice, if its disclosure would not impair Executive policymaking processes or CEQ's participation in decisionmaking.

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COSTS

§ 1515.11 Definitions.

For purposes of these regulations:

Commercial use request means a request from or on behalf of a person who seeks information for a use or purpose that furthers the requester's or other person's commercial, trade, or profit interests.

Direct costs means those costs incurred in searching for and duplicating (and, in the case of commercial use requests, reviewing) documents to respond to a FOIA request. Direct costs include, for example, salaries of employees who perform the work and costs of conducting large-scale computer searches.

Duplicate means to copy records to be released to the FOIA requester. Copies can take the form of paper, audio-visual materials, or electronic records, among others.

Educational institution means a school that operates a program of scholarly research.

Non-commercial scientific institution means an institution that is not operated on a commercial basis and that operates solely for the purpose of conducting scientific research the results of which are not intended to promote any particular product or industry.

Representative of the news media means any person or entity that gathers information of potential interest to a segment of the public, uses its editorial skills to turn the raw materials into a distinct work, and distributes that work to an audience.

Review means to examine a record to determine whether any portion of the record may be withheld and to process a record for disclosure, including by redacting it.

Search means to look for and retrieve records covered by a FOIA request, including by looking page-by-page or line-by-line to identify responsive material within individual records.

§ 1515.12 Fees in general.

CEQ shall charge fees that recoup the full allowable direct costs it incurs in responding to FOIA requests. CEQ may assess charges for time spent searching for records even if CEQ fails to locate the records or if the records are located