



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Chief Financial Officer
Assistant Secretary for Administration
Washington, D.C. 20230

November 24, 2010

John Althen
Judicial Watch
425 Third Street, S.W.
Suite 800
Washington, D.C. 20024

RE: Freedom of Information Act Request 2010-00572

Dear Mr. Althen:

This is an interim response to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request dated August 20, 2010, to the Department of Commerce regarding the Oil Budget. Enclosed please find approximately 6,000 pages of responsive materials. Including in this production are deliberative and pre-decisional documents, which we are producing today as a discretionary matter.

Throughout the Deepwater Horizon BP oil spill response, this administration has been committed to transparency and accountability. These documents reveal commitment to share information with the public as soon as we were confident it was accurate, close coordination among numerous agencies and the White House, and healthy scientific debate that is the hallmark of good policy making, especially during a national crisis. In addition, the contents of these emails show the effort made to communicate real-time scientific information to the American public quickly and clearly.

As you are aware, this week the federal government released a peer-reviewed report that provides the technical documentation for the Oil Budget and refines the estimates on the short-term fate of the oil based on additional data. The report, developed in collaboration with federal and independent scientists, largely validates the early results released on August 4.

A small number of documents are being partially redacted pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552 exemption high (b)(2), which protects from disclosure records if disclosure would risk the circumvention of a statute, agency regulation, or other legal requirement.

A small number of documents are being partially redacted pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552 exemption (b)(6), which protects from disclosure information about individuals, the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy. We have withheld cell phone numbers and personal email addresses.

We have not completed the review of responsive documents. Upon completion, we will forward to you a final response.

You have the right to appeal this partial denial of your FOIA request. An appeal must be received within 30 calendar days of the date of this response letter by the Assistant General Counsel for Administration (Office), Room 5898-C, U.S. Department of Commerce, 14th and Constitution Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20230. Your appeal may also be sent by e-mail to FOIAAppeals@doc.gov or by facsimile (fax) to 202-482-2552. The appeal must include a copy of the original request, this response to the request and a statement of the reason why the denial of your fee waiver was in error. The submission (including e-mail and fax submissions) is not complete without the required attachments. The appeal letter, the envelope, the e-mail subject line, and the fax cover sheet should be clearly marked "Freedom of Information Act Appeal." The e-mail, fax machine, and Office are monitored only on working days during normal business hours (8:30 a.m. to 5:00p.m., Eastern Time, Monday through Friday). FOIA appeals posted to the e-mail box, fax machine or Office after normal business hours will be deemed received on the next normal business day.

Sincerely,



Brenda Dolan
Departmental Freedom of Information
and Privacy Act Officer

Enclosures