

FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION  
ANNUAL FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT REPORT  
FY 1999

I. Basic Information Regarding the Report

A. Contact with questions about the report.

Heide Sanford  
FOIA Liaison  
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission  
888 First Street, NE, Code EA-20  
Washington, DC 20426

Telephone : 202-208-0857  
FAX Number: 202-208-0500

B. Electronic address for report on the World Wide Web.

<http://www.ferc.fed.us/foia/1999annr.pdf>

C. How to obtain a copy of the report in paper form.

Write to the following address:

Public Reference and Files Maintenance Branch  
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission  
888 First Street, NE, Room 2A  
Washington, DC 20426

Telephone : 202-208-1371  
FAX Number: 202-208-2320  
E-Mail : [Public.ReferenceRoom@FERC.fed.us](mailto:Public.ReferenceRoom@FERC.fed.us)

II. How to Make a FOIA Request

Please refer to the FOIA Reference Guide on the Commission's Web Site  
(<http://www.ferc.fed.us/foia/frefguide.htm>)

A. Name, address, and telephone number of individual receiving FOIA requests at the

Commission.

Kathleen M. Hirning  
Director, Office of External Affairs  
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission  
888 First Street, NE, Code EA-1  
Washington, DC 20426

Telephone: 202-208-0004

- B. The Commission's most rapid response for FY 1999 equaled one day. The longest response time for FY 1999 equaled 438 days.
- C. Some FOIA requests are not granted because (a) the agency has no responsive documents, (b) some or part of the material requested falls within one or more of the exemptions to FOIA and is not appropriate for discretionary release, or (c) another method of providing the material to the requester is negotiated, such as having the requester become an intervener in a Commission proceeding.

### III. Definitions of Terms and Acronyms Used in the Report

- A. Agency-specific acronyms or other terms.
  - 1. Track One Requests -- the processing track for a FOIA request that is seeking records that are readily identifiable and were previously cleared for release.
  - 2. Track Two Requests -- the processing track for a FOIA request that is seeking records that are readily identifiable and require limited review.
  - 3. Track Three Requests -- the processing track for a FOIA request that is seeking records that are complex and/or voluminous records and require a significant search and/or review.
- B. Basic terms, expressed in common terminology.
  - 1. FOIA/PA Request -- Freedom of Information Act/Privacy Act request. A FOIA request is generally a request for access to records concerning a third party, an organization, or a particular topic of interest. A Privacy Act request is a request for records concerning oneself; such requests are also treated as FOIA requests. (All requests for access to records, regardless of which law is cited by the requester, are included in this report.)
  - 2. Initial Request -- a request to a federal agency for access to records under the

## Freedom of Information Act.

3. Appeal -- a request to a federal agency asking that it review at a higher administrative level a full denial or partial denial of access to records under the Freedom of Information Act, or any other FOIA determination such as a matter pertaining to fees.
4. Processed Request or Appeal -- a request or appeal for which an agency has taken a final action on the request or the appeal in all respects.
5. 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 the one or more other tracks. Requests in each track are processed on a first-in/first-out basis. A requester who has an urgent need for records may request expedited processing (see below).
6. Expedited Processing -- an agency will process a FOIA request on an expedited basis when a requester has shown an exceptional need or urgency for the records which warrants prioritization of his or her request over other requests that were made earlier.
7. Simple Request -- a FOIA request that an agency using multi-track processing places in its fastest (nonexpedited) track based on the volume and/or simplicity of records requested.
8. Complex Request -- a FOIA request that an agency using multi-track processing places in a slower track based on the volume and/or complexity of records requested.
9. Grant -- an agency decision to disclose all records in full in response to a FOIA request.
10. Partial Grant -- an agency decision to disclose a record in part in response to a FOIA request, deleting information determined to be exempt under one or more of the FOIA's exemptions; or a decision to disclose some records in their entirety, but to withhold others in whole or in part.
11. Denial -- an agency decision not to release any part of a record or records in response to a FOIA request because all the information in requested records is determined by the agency to be exempt under one or more of the FOIA's exemptions, or for some procedural reason (such as because no record is located in response to a FOIA request).

12. Time Limits -- the time period in the Freedom of Information Act for an agency to respond to a FOIA request (ordinarily 20 working days from proper receipt of a "perfected" FOIA request).
13. "Perfected" Request -- a FOIA request for records which adequately describes the records sought, which has been received by the FOIA office of the agency or agency component in possession of the records, and for which there is no remaining question about the payment of applicable fees.
14. Exemption 3 Statute -- a separate federal statute prohibiting the disclosure of a certain type of information and authorizing its withholding under FOIA subsection (b)(3).
15. Median Number -- the middle, not average, number. For example, of 3, 7, and 14, the median number is 7.
16. 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.

#### IV. Exemption 3 Statutes

##### A. List of Exemption 3 statutes relied on by the Commission during FY 1999.

1. The National Defense Authorization Act of 1997, Pub. L. No. 104-201, § 821, 110 Stat. 2422 codified at 41 U.S.C. § 253b(m), prohibits agencies from releasing the proposals of unsuccessful offerers.
2. Statement of whether a court upheld the use of this statute.

To our knowledge, the statute has not been considered by the courts.

#### V. Initial FOIA/PA Access Requests

##### A. Numbers of initial requests.

1. Number of requests pending  
as of end of preceding fiscal year : 24
2. Number of requests received during  
current fiscal year : 67

- 3. Number of requests processed during fiscal year : 77
- 4. Number of requests pending as of end of current fiscal year : 14

B. Disposition of initial requests.

- 1. Number of total grants : 20
- 2. Number of partial grants : 9
- 3. Number of denials : 48

a. Number of times each FOIA exemption used

- (1) Exemption 1 : 0
- (2) Exemption 2 : 1
- (3) Exemption 3 : 1
- (4) Exemption 4 : 3
- (5) Exemption 5 : 7
- (6) Exemption 6 : 1
- (7) Exemption 7(A) : 2
- (8) Exemption 7(B) : 0
- (9) Exemption 7(C) : 0
- (10) Exemption 7(D): 2
- (11) Exemption 7(E): 0
- (12) Exemption 7(F): 0
- (13) Exemption 8 : 0

(14) Exemption 9 : 1

4.	Other reasons for nondisclosure	
a.	No records	: 18
b.	Referrals	: 3
c.	Request withdrawn	: 24
d.	Fee-related reason	: 1
e.	Records not reasonably described	: 0
f.	Not a proper FOIA request for some other reason	: 0
g.	Not an agency record	: 0
h.	Duplicate request	: 0
i.	Other	: 0

VI. Appeals in Initial Denials of FOIA/PA Requests

A.	Numbers of appeals.	
1.	Number of appeals received during fiscal year	: 3
2.	Number of appeals processed during fiscal year	: 3
B.	Disposition of appeals.	
1.	Number completely upheld	: 1
2.	Number partially reversed	: 1
3.	Number completely reversed	: 0

a. Number of times each  
FOIA exemption used

- (1) Exemption 1 : 0
- (2) Exemption 2 : 0
- (3) Exemption 3 : 0
- (4) Exemption 4 : 0
- (5) Exemption 5 : 1
- (6) Exemption 6 : 0
- (7) Exemption 7(A) : 0
- (8) Exemption 7(B) : 0
- (9) Exemption 7(C) : 0
- (10) Exemption 7(D) : 0
- (11) Exemption 7(E) : 0
- (12) Exemption 7(F) : 0
- (13) Exemption 8 : 0
- (14) Exemption 9 : 0

4. Other reasons for nondisclosure

- a. No records : 0
- b. Referrals : 0
- c. Request withdrawn : 1
- d. Fee-related reason : 0
- e. Records not reasonably described : 0

- f. Not a proper FOIA request for some other reason : 0
- g. Not an agency record : 0
- h. Duplicate request : 0
- i. Other : 0

VII. Compliance with Time Limits/Status of Pending Requests

A. Median processing time for requests processed during the year.

- 1. Track one requests
  - a. Number of requests processed : 15
  - b. Median number of days to process : 12
- 2. Track two requests
  - a. Number of requests processed : 50
  - b. Median number of days to process : 68
- 3. Track three requests
  - a. Number of requests processed : 11
  - b. Median number of days to process : 42
- 4. Requests accorded expedited processing : 0
  - a. Number of requests processed
  - b. Median number of days to process



B. Status of pending requests

1. Track one requests

a. Number of requests pending  
as of end of current fiscal  
year : 0

b. Median number of days that  
such requests were pending as  
of that date : 0

2. Track two requests

a. Number of requests pending  
as of end of current fiscal  
year : 12

b. Median number of days that  
such requests were pending as  
of that date : 113

3. Track three requests

a. Number of requests pending  
as of end of current fiscal  
year : 2

b. Median number of days that  
such requests were pending as  
of that date : 8

VIII. Comparisons with Previous Year(s): N/A

- A. There was a 32% decrease in the number of requests received in FY 1999 as compared to FY 1998.
- B. There were 10% fewer requests processed in FY 1999 than in FY 1998.
- C. The median number of days requests were pending as of the end of FY 1999 is 42% smaller as compared to the end of FY 1998.
- D. Other statistics significant to agency: None

- E. Other narrative statements describing agency efforts to improve timeliness of FOIA performance and to make records available to the public (e.g., backlog-reduction efforts; specification of average number of hours per processed request; training activities; public availability of new categories of records).

It is possible that the Commission is experiencing a significant reduction in the number of requests received as a result of the implementation of the FOIA Web Page, as well as, the Commission's RIMS on the Web. RIMS identifies documents in a proceeding. The system also allows documents to be printed from the Web if they are dated after November 1995.

IX. Costs/FOIA Staffing

A. Staffing levels.

- 1. Number of full-time FOIA personnel : 0
- 2. Number of personnel with part-time or occasional FOIA duties (in total work-years) : 1.41
- 3. Total number of personnel (in work-years) : 1.41

B. Total costs.

- 1. FOIA processing : \$497,000
- 2. Litigation-related activities : N/A
- 3. Total costs : \$497,000
- 4. Comparison with previous year : 17% Inc.

X. Fees

- A. Total amount of fees collected processing requests : \$2,660
- B. Percentage of total costs : .54%

XI. FOIA Regulations (Including Fee Schedule)

The Commission's FOIA regulations, 18 C.F.R. § 388.108, can be accessed through GPO (<http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/index.html>)