



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Office of the General Counsel
1400 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20250-1400

June 25, 2021

Delivered via Electronic Mail

Morgan Yardis
Research and Publication Associate
Email: foia@protectpublictrust.org

Re: Final Response to Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request 2021-OGC-04079-F

Dear Ms. Yardis:

This is the final response to the June 2, 2021, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request submitted to the Office of Information Affairs (OIA), FOIA Division. Your request sought the following agency records, from November 23, 2020 through the date of FOIA processing:

All waivers, impartiality determinations, or any other guidance issued to political appointees of the Biden Administration exempting them from any part of their obligations as defined in relevant laws, regulations, rules, and/or the Biden Administration's Ethics Pledge, including any records and communications between employees of the Office of the General Counsel, as well as any records and communications between the Office of the General Counsel and any political appointees regarding waivers or impartiality determinations.

Your request has been processed under the FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552.

A search for responsive records was conducted by the Office of Ethics (OE), which is organized under the General Counsel's Office. OE maintains all ethics-related records and communications for the USDA. The OE search did not identify any agency records that are responsive to your FOIA request. For this reason, I am unable to provide any responsive records.

You may appeal this response by email at USDAFOIA@usda.gov. Your appeal must be in writing, and it must be received electronically no later than 90 calendar days from the date of this letter. The OGC will not consider appeals received after the 90 calendar-day limit. Appeals received after 5:00 p.m. EST will be considered received the next business day. The appeal should include the FOIA tracking number listed above, a copy of the original request, the OIA's response to your original request, and a statement explaining the basis of your appeal. For quickest possible handling, the subject line of your email and the appeal letter should be marked "Freedom of Information Act Appeal." You should also reference FOIA Case No. **2021-OGC-04079-F**.

Provisions of the FOIA allow us to recover part of the cost of processing your request. In this instance, no fees will be charged.

You may seek dispute resolution services from the OIA's FOIA Public Liaison, Mr. Harald Fuller-Bennett. Mr. Fuller-Bennett may be contacted by telephone at 202-239-4522, or electronically at Harald.FullerBennett@usda.gov or USDAFOIA@usda.gov.

Additionally, you may contact the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS). Please visit <https://ogis.archives.gov/mediation-program/request-assistance.htm> for information about how to request OGIS assistance in relation to a FOIA request.

If you have any questions regarding the processing of this request, please contact the OIA electronically at USDAFOIA@usda.gov.

The OIA appreciates the opportunity to assist you with this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alexis R. Graves".

Alexis R. Graves
Director
Office of Information Affairs