



OFFICE *of* GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES

February 6, 2015 — Sent via email

██████████
██████████

Re: Case No.: 201500200
NG: CM: KG

NATIONAL
ARCHIVES
and RECORDS
ADMINISTRATION

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OGIS
COLLEGE PARK, MD
20740-6001

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e-mail: ogis@nara.gov
phone: 202-741-5770
toll-free: 1-877-684-6448
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Dear ██████████

This responds to your December 9, 2014 request for assistance from the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS), pertaining to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to the Department of the Interior (DOI).

Congress created OGIS as the Federal FOIA Ombudsman to complement existing FOIA practice and procedure; we strive to work in conjunction with the agency's request and appeal process. The goal is for OGIS to allow, whenever practical, the requester to exhaust his or her remedies within the agency, including the appeal process. OGIS has no investigatory or enforcement power, nor can we compel an agency to release documents.

You contacted OGIS about a FOIA request you filed with the Office of the Solicitor General (SOL). I understand that you requested documents pertaining to a legal matter in ██████████ involving minerals interests in a ██████ acre tract of land, originally allotted to ██████████. You have not received an acknowledgement letter or been able to obtain status information from SOL. You asked OGIS to look into this matter.

We reached out to DOI and requested a tracking number for your request and a date by which the agency expects to complete your FOIA request. DOI declined to provide information about the status of your case, a tracking number, or an estimated date of completion.

Please know that FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(7)(A) and (B), gives requesters the right to obtain tracking numbers, find out the status of the request using the assigned tracking number, and request an estimated date on which an agency expects to respond to a request.

Please also know that the President's FOIA Memorandum (available online at www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/FreedomofInformationAct/) and the Attorney General's FOIA Guidelines (www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/ag/legacy/2009/06/24/foia-memo-



February 6, 2015

Page 2 of 2

march2009.pdf) call on agencies “to work ‘in a spirit of cooperation’ with FOIA requesters.” The Attorney General’s Guidelines also emphasize that agencies should avoid unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles when administering the law. For your reference I am attaching the Department of Justice, Office of the Information Policy’s guidance concerning this requirement.

In cases such as this where an agency declines to provide information about a request, there is little assistance OGIS can offer. Thank you for bringing this matter to OGIS. We will close your case.

Sincerely,

/s/

Nikki Gramian, Acting Director
Office of Government Information Services (OGIS)

cc: Bobby Talebian, Chief, FOIA Compliance Staff, DOJ/OIP
Darrell Strayhorn, FOIA & Privacy Act Appeals Officer, DOI
Edward Keable, Deputy Solicitor-General, DOI

We appreciate your feedback. Please visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/OGIS> to take a brief anonymous survey on the service you received from OGIS.