



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

National Headquarters
Washington, DC 20240
<https://www.blm.gov>



July 11, 2024

Ms. Chandra Rosenthal
Public Lands Director, Public Employees
for Environmental Responsibility
155 Ash Street
Denver, Colorado 80220

Dear Ms. Rosenthal:

Thank you for your letter dated April 30, 2024, regarding the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request backlog and the BLM's proactive disclosure practices.

The BLM receives a significant volume of FOIA requests, averaging between 900 and 1,200 each year. In recent years, the FOIA requests have increased in both number and complexity, resulting in a current backlog of 1,600 requests. To begin addressing these challenges, the BLM's National FOIA Program enlisted contract support at the beginning of fiscal year 2024 dedicated to reducing the backlog. We are also working to make previously internal information, such as the wild horse and burro database, accessible to the public to reduce FOIA requests and facilitate easier access to requested data.

The BLM has also launched an initiative with the Department of the Interior's (Department) FOIA Office to achieve a 10 percent reduction in the backlog by the end of the fiscal year. This effort involves analyzing and strategically approaching the backlog by, among other things, pursuing improved requester outreach and collaboration. Our team has already been in contact with WildEarth Guardians to begin this engagement and look forward to similarly engaging the other organizations represented in your letter. The Departmental FOIA Office has also begun conducting an operational assessment of the BLM's FOIA program to identify measures we can take to keep responses timely.

Thank you again for your interest in the BLM FOIA program. Please feel free to share a copy of this response with the cosigners of your letter.

Sincerely,

Tracy Stone-Manning
Director