



Department of Energy

Bonneville Power Administration
P.O. Box 3621
Portland, Oregon 97208-3621

CORPORATE

January 28, 2002

In reply refer to: C-4

Mr. Tim Detzel
Newhouse News Service
1101 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20036

Dear Mr. Detzel:

This letter responds to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request dated January 2, 2003, designated as FOIA log #03-015. You requested all written or electronic communications between Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and Northwest members of congress during the period from December 31, 2000 to the present. You asked that any documents, reports, fact sheets or other information generated by BPA to accompany the requested communications also be included.

Enclosed are non-exempt portions of records responsive to your request. BPA has determined that some of the information you requested is exempt from disclosure under 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(6) (exemption 6). Exemption 6 protects personnel, medical and similar files from disclosure when disclosure would result in a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy. This exemption is intended to protect individuals from the injury and embarrassment that could result from an unnecessary disclosure of personal information.

In order to determine whether information should be withheld under exemption 6, an agency must (1) identify whether a privacy interest exists, (2) identify whether release of the document would further the public interest by shedding light on the operations and activities of the Government, and (3) weigh the identified privacy interests against the public interest as a whole in order to determine whether disclosure of the information would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.

BPA asserts exemption 6 for the names of private citizens who contacted their congressional representatives to assist them in dealing with BPA on personal matters.

First, we have determined that a privacy interest exists in this type of information because individuals who write to the government expressing personal opinions generally do so with some expectation of confidentiality.

Second, although the substance of the letters themselves may be of public interest, the release of the identities of the individuals who wrote the letters would not shed any light on the operations and activities of the Government.

There will be no charge assessed for the processing of this request.

If you are dissatisfied with this determination, you may make an appeal within thirty (30) days of your receipt of this letter to Director, Office of Hearings and Appeals, Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Avenue, Washington, D.C. 20585. Both the envelope and letter must be clearly marked "Freedom of Information Act Appeal."

Sincerely,



Annie Eissler
Freedom of Information Act Officer