

August 1, 2011

Alexander Morris
Freedom of Information Act Officer,
Department of Energy,
1000 Independence Avenue SW,
Washington, DC 20585.

Re: Disclosure of Energy Information Administration meetings and
communications with Congressional offices

Dear Mr. Morris:

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. § 552, we hereby request access to (or a copy of) all records pertaining to meetings within the Energy Information Administration (EIA) regarding an update to the report entitled "Federal Financial Intervention and Subsidies in Energy Markets 2007" and all records of communications between the EIA and the Congressional offices of Representatives Chaffetz (UT-3), Blackburn (TN-7), and Bartlett (MD-6).

We are filing this request for all records pertaining to all communication between the EIA and Reps. Chaffetz, Blackburn and Bartlett and their offices, and all additional communications within the EIA, regarding the aforementioned report: dates of meetings, lists of attendees, agendas, preparatory notes, minutes of meetings and correspondence, including letters, notes, emails, phone records and memoranda. In addition, we request all scoping and planning documents prepared with reference to the report, "Federal Financial Intervention and Subsidies in Energy Markets 2007."

We recently read that the EIA halted its delivery of the report to Congressional requestors due to "quality assurance" concerns.

In the letter requesting the report be updated, Representatives Chaffetz, Blackburn and Bartlett specify that the EIA should update the 2007 estimates using "BTU" models that have long been used by the fossil fuel lobby to defend the massive government handouts it receives. The coal, oil and gas industries have grown increasingly uncomfortable with the scrutiny of their welfare recipient status, and they are clearly seeking to change the conversation by eroding the 90 percent support among Americans for pro-clean energy policies.

We are seeking these documents to see whether or not Administrator Gruenspecht was put in the difficult situation of essentially producing talking points for members of Congress who want to distort the debate around the massive government handouts for oil, coal and gas companies. We are particularly interested in determining if there was any budgetary pressure applied by members of the House to get the EIA to release this deeply flawed and misleading piece of propaganda.

If Administrator Gruenspecht believed the report's production was unduly influenced by demands placed by elected officials, who are backed by significant amounts of campaign contributions from the fossil fuel industry, it is imperative for the public to know. The EIA is tasked with "collecting, analyzing and disseminating independent and impartial energy information," not providing members of Congress with a press release.

We are making this request on behalf of the Checks and Balances Project, Greenpeace, and Oil Change International. The Checks and Balances Project is a government and industry watchdog group, with a mission to use research and reporting to hold government officials, lobbyists, and corporate management accountable for their actions related to energy, government spending, public health and the environment. Greenpeace is a global campaigning organization that acts to change attitudes and behavior, to protect and conserve the environment and promote peace. Oil Change International runs campaigns to expose the true costs of fossil fuels and facilitate the coming transition towards clean energy.

The information provided will be used to educate the public via online blogs and networks. This request is made on behalf the public and not for commercial use.

We request a waiver of all fees for this request. Disclosure of the requested information to me is in the public interest because it is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government and is not primarily in our commercial interest.

We request that the information we seek be provided in electronic format, especially if it will expedite the request.

We ask that our request receive expedited processing because there is an urgent need to inform the public concerning actual or alleged Federal Government activity regarding the update of the aforementioned report. The public interest will benefit from the timely dissemination of this information especially due to the impact of energy policy decisions on ordinary American families.

We also include a telephone number at which we can be contacted during the hours of 9 AM and 6 PM EDT, if necessary, to discuss any aspect of our request.

We will expect a response within 20 working days as provided by law. If our request is denied in whole or in part, we expect a detailed justification for withholding the records. We also request any segregable portions that are not exempt to be disclosed.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Gabriel Elsner,
Deputy Director, Checks and Balances Project,
P.O. Box 12674,
Arlington, VA, 22219.
Phone: (310) 738-3738

Steve Kretzmann,
Executive Director, Oil Change International,
236 Massachusetts Ave NE #203,
Washington, D.C., 20002.

Kert Davies,
Research Director, Greenpeace,
702 H St NW # 300,
Washington, D.C., 20001.