

# EXHIBIT H

**From:** [Sanghyun Lee](#)  
**To:** [Rementer.Nicole@epa.gov](mailto:Rementer.Nicole@epa.gov); [newton.jonathan@epa.gov](mailto:newton.jonathan@epa.gov)  
**Subject:** RE: FOIA Request: EPA-HQ-2018-005041  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 05, 2018 5:16:00 PM

---

Hello Ms. Rementer,

This message is in response to the June 1, 2018 email received by Sylvia Lam from EPA, seen below. This EPA email appears to be a boilerplate email sent to all FOIA requesters who have submitted requests to the Office of the Administrator, and estimates completion dates for all requests 388 working days from the date the request was submitted, regardless of content or scope.

I recognize that EPA's Office of the Administrator has had considerable difficulty in keeping up with its FOIA obligations. It is our understanding, however, that this backlog is largely a direct result of EPA's new policy, implemented shortly after Administrator Pruitt took office, to have political appointees at OA review all FOIA requests that appear related to the Administrator.

Although this boilerplate response does not appear to be tailored in any way to our request, aside from the completion date based solely on the date the request was submitted, EIP will continue its attempt to accommodate EPA as much as possible in its request.

I. CLARIFICATION

EPA's June 1 email states that "If you wish to clarify your request, so that once we reach the request in the queue, it might be processed in a shorter amount of time, please contact Nicole Rementer." Because the June 1 letter is boilerplate, we assume this statement does not apply to our request and that clarification is unnecessary at this time. Our request sought records of travel expenditures for all travel outside of Washington, DC by Administrator Pruitt and accompanying staff, from August 18, 2017 through March 2, 2018. Our previous correspondences with EPA attorney Christopher Creech have already confirmed that currently outstanding records for this request include:

- a. Records of travel expenditures for Administrator Pruitt from February 15, 2018 through March 2, 2018; and
- b. Records of travel expenditures for staff accompanying Administrator Pruitt, including, but not limited to, staff assigned to security detail for the Administrator, from August 18, 2017 through March 2, 2018.

These records are easily accessible, routinely gathered, and are of the exact same format as those produced by EPA to EIP for several recent FOIA requests. However, if EPA has any specific questions about this request, we will be happy to answer them.

II. TIMEFRAME FOR RESPONSE

Given how narrow and clearly defined our request is, we also disagree with EPA's

assessment that this is a “complex FOIA request” that will require AO nearly 388 working days to process. Because these records are easily accessible, routinely gathered, and of the same format as records that have previously been located and produced by EPA to EIP for recent requests, it should be a relatively simple matter for EPA to retrieve these documents and determine whether or not it will disclose them.

III. NO RESPONSIVE DOCUMENTS FOUND IN LINKS PROVIDED

In the spirit of further accommodation, we have conducted searches for the records requested on EPA’s website, newsroom, prior releases on FOIAonline, and frequently requested records, as linked to by EPA’s June 1 boilerplate email. Searches at all these locations for “travel vouchers,” “travel expenditures,” and “travel expenses” did not yield the requested records. None of the links provided led to records that would be responsive to EIP’s FOIA request. Four of the links provided are not relevant to our request (MyProperty, NSCEP, Superfund, and the January 19, 2017 EPA website).

If you have any further questions for me, please feel free to contact me at any time. We assume, because your June 1 email was boilerplate, that EPA is not suggesting that any clarification is necessary at this time. However, if EPA has any specific questions about this request, we will be happy to answer them.

All best,

Sanghyun Lee  
Attorney  
Environmental Integrity Project  
1000 Vermont Avenue NW, Suite 1100  
Washington, DC 20005  
(202) 263-4441

CONFIDENTIAL LEGAL COMMUNICATION / WORK PRODUCT: The information transmitted is intended only for the person or entity to whom it is addressed, and may contain privileged and confidential attorney-client communications and/or confidential attorney work product. If you receive this message in error, please send a reply e-mail to the sender and delete the material from any and all computers and/or electronic devices. Unintended transmissions shall not constitute waiver of the attorney-client or any other privilege.

**From:** [newton.jonathan@epa.gov](mailto:newton.jonathan@epa.gov) <[newton.jonathan@epa.gov](mailto:newton.jonathan@epa.gov)>  
**Sent:** Friday, June 1, 2018 2:03 PM  
**To:** Sylvia Lam <[slam@environmentalintegrity.org](mailto:slam@environmentalintegrity.org)>  
**Subject:** FOIA Request: EPA-HQ-2018-005041

This email is about your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request, EPA-HQ-2018-005041; it is assigned to the Office of the Administrator for processing.

The Office of the Administrator has experienced a significant increase in FOIA requests since the start of this administration. As of May 7, 2018, your FOIA request, EPA-HQ-2018-

005041, is currently 1111 in the queue. We are processing all FOIAs within the scope of our resources, given the sharp increase in requests. If possible, we will provide you with interim releases as they become available.

In fiscal year 2017, the average processing time for complex FOIA requests processed by AO was 388 working days. Using this number as instructive to estimate the time to process your request, the new estimated completion date for this FOIA is August 28, 2019.

The following are some sources of publicly available information that you can access immediately and which may contain information responsive to your request:

- Our website: <https://www.epa.gov/home/advanced-search>
- The EPA newsroom: <https://www.epa.gov/newsroom>
- FOIAonline for records previously released through FOIA requests: <https://foiaonline.regulations.gov/foia/action/public/search/>
- Frequently requested records: <https://www.epa.gov/foia/national-online-foia-library#request>
- MyProperty: <https://www3.epa.gov/enviro/facts/myproperty/>
- Technical/scientific/educational publications: <https://www.epa.gov/nscep>
- Superfund sites and data: <https://www.epa.gov/foia/national-online-foia-library#superfund>
- Historical material reflecting the EPA website as it existed on January 19, 2017 <https://19january2017snapshot.epa.gov/>

If you wish to clarify your request, so that once we reach the request in the queue, it might be processed in a shorter amount of time, please contact Nicole Rementer, [Rementer.Nicole@epa.gov](mailto:Rementer.Nicole@epa.gov). If you are no longer interested in the requested records, please let us know so that we can remove your request from the queue. Please be sure to include your tracking number, EPA-HQ-2018-005041, in the email subject to ensure a timely response.

In addition to seeking assistance from the contact above, you may seek assistance from the EPA's FOIA Public Liaison at [hq.foia@epa.gov](mailto:hq.foia@epa.gov) or (202) 566-1667, or from the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS). OGIS's services are described on their website, <https://www.archives.gov/ogis>. You may contact OGIS in any of the following ways: by mail, Office of Government Information Services, National Archives and Records Administration, 8601 Adelphi Road-OGIS, College Park, MD 20740-6001; email: [ogis@nara.gov](mailto:ogis@nara.gov); telephone: (202) 741-5770 or (877) 684-6448; or fax: (202) 741-5769.

Thank you,

Nicole Rementer