



Chief Information
Officer

UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
Washington, DC 20415

August 6, 2018

Mr. Jeff Ruch
Public Employees for
Environmental Responsibility
962 Wayne Avenue, Suite 610
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Re: 2018-07948

Dear Mr. Ruch:

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has received your perfected request for information pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA; 5 USC 552, as amended), dated July 13, 2018.

Specifically, you requested:

“Every year since 2002, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has conducted a Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS), the results of which measure employee morale, engagement, and other perceptions about their agencies.

“The definition for ‘senior leaders’ in prior surveys was: ‘The heads of departments/agencies and their immediate leadership team responsible for directing the policies and priorities of the department/agency. May hold either a political or career appointment...’

“In an ‘improved’ survey rolled out to federal employees, OPM changed that definition for the 2018 survey to mean: ‘The nearest senior executive (SES, Director, or higher-level GS [i.e., civil servant] in your organizational structure...’ (Emphasis added). Thus, unless the employee was a direct or second level report to a political appointee, that person’s view of that top official is now outside the survey scope.

“Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. 552, as amended, Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER) requests information concerning the basis for this change of definition in the FEVS survey instrument. Specifically, we request the following:

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“1. Any OPM rationale for this definition change circulated both internally or to other federal agencies; and

“2. A copy of each email in the account of the following 13 OPM officials:

“Kimberly Wells, Survey Analysis, Office of Strategy and Analysis

Lance Harris, Data Analysis, Office of Strategy and Analysis

[Kimya] Lee, Senior Advisor on Research and Evaluation

[Jozetta] R. Robinson, Executive Secretary and Research Management Officer

Stephen D. Hickman, Deputy Executive Secretary

Kathleen McGettigan, Chief Management Officer

Kathleen M. Bullock, White House Liaison

Stephen M. Billy, Deputy Chief of Staff

Michael D. Dovilla, Chief of Staff

Michael J. Rigas, Deputy Director

Timothy J. Duffy, Special Assistant to the Deputy Director

Jeff T.H. Pon, Director

Mary E. Anderson, Special Assistant to the Director

“during the period January 1, 2018 to the present, that contains any of the following words

“Change

Changes

Modify

Modification

Modifications

Definition

Leadership

Senior

“This request does not include any news clipping or article.”

And, in response to OPM’s question on the timeframe of the request, you clarified:

“As we do not know precisely when this change was finalized, it is difficult to set a start date. All we know is that the change first appeared in the 2018 FEVS. Thus, I think we would capture what

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“we are seeking from a start date of January 1, 2017 up to the finalization of the FEVS 2018 survey containing the revised definition.

“Please let me know if you need or would benefit from greater clarification than this.”

The FOIA request number for this request is 2018-07948. Please reference this number in any future communication with OPM about this request.

OPM processes FOIA requests on a “first-in, first-out” basis. The actual processing time will vary depending upon the complexity of the request and whether or not it involves voluminous records or extensive searches or consultations. OPM also processes FOIA requests on a multi-track basis. This means that simple requests, requiring minimal effort to respond, are processed in one track; and complex requests involving voluminous records, extensive searches or consultations (requiring more than 20 workdays to respond) are processed in another track. OPM has placed your request in the complex track.

Also, OPM has made the following determination with respect to your request for a fee waiver: your request for a fee waiver is granted.

If you have any questions regarding your request, you may contact the FOIA Requester Service Center by email at foia@opm.gov or by calling (202) 606-3642.

Sincerely,

Freedom of Information Act
Requester Service Center
Office of the Chief Information Officer