

Exhibit 9



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

April 18, 2018

Patrick Mullen, Esq.
Sparacino & Andreson PLLC
1920 L Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Mr. Mullen:

Thank you for your email of April 13, 2018, concerning the following Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA") requests in which you note that the Department of State has not yet responded:

F-2017-17610
F-2018-00003
F-2018-00010
F-2018-00011

Your FOIA requests are not subject to administrative appeal at this time, since no specific material has been denied in response to the request. Section (a)(6)(C) of the FOIA provides that a requester shall be deemed to have exhausted his administrative remedies if an agency fails to respond within the applicable time limit specified in the paragraph, which is twenty days (with certain exceptions). The requester, therefore, would not be required to appeal administratively before instituting suit in federal court. This provision does not, however, provide a basis for an administrative appeal of a request that is still being processed. Moreover, the lack of a substantive response to date is not the same as a response indicating that no documents were found.

I have confirmed that your requests are being processed. The Department receives thousands of FOIA and Privacy Act requests each year and yours will be processed in turn. Your continued patience is appreciated. If you need further assistance, you may contact the FOIA Requester Service Center at (202) 261-8484 or FOIAstatus@state.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lori Hartmann".

Lori Hartmann
Appeals Officer
Office of Information Programs and Services