

Office of Information Affairs

February 27, 2025

Delivered via Electronic Mail

Nathan Wessler
American Civil Liberties Union Foundation
125 Broad Street, 18th Floor
New York, New York 10004
nwessler@aclu.org

**Re: Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request No. 2025-OSEC-04631-F
Final Response**

Dear Nathan Wessler:

This is the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Office of Information Affairs' (OIA) final response to the above-referenced FOIA request, which sought, beginning at noon on January 20, 2025, communications concerning the following:

- (1) Any request by persons affiliated with or representing DOGE or USDS for access to any data repository, database, system of records, computer matching program, code base, or other system containing personally identifiable information (PII), personnel records (including records of federal employees, contractors, and applicants), financial data, health data, or other sensitive data, and any response to such request;
- (2) Any decision, analysis or discussion about whether access to any data repository, database, system of records, computer matching program, code base, or other system containing personally identifiable information (PII), personnel records, financial data, health data, or other sensitive data by persons affiliated with or representing DOGE or USDS is prohibited or constrained by statute, regulation, or rule; and
- (3) Any proposed or actual use of artificial intelligence, including but not limited to services, models, or other software applications provided by AI or Grok, by or at the direction or request of persons affiliated with or representing DOGE or USDS to analyze agency records or data.

On February 12, 2025, you clarified your request by specifying a list of custodians to be used in an electronic search, specifically, the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary's top advisors, including the Secretary's Chief of Staff, the Chief Information Officer, the Senior Advisor for Government Efficiency, the Chief Financial Officer, the General Counsel, and appropriate personnel in OBPA.

On February 14, 2025, the OIA acknowledged receipt of your request and denied your request for expedited processing.

Your request has been processed under the FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552.

Nathan Wessler

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The USDA's Client Experience Center (CEC) conducted a search for responsive records. The CEC provides comprehensive, fee-for-service information technology (IT) associated operations, security, and technical support services to USDA end users. The CEC also implements and manages enterprise IT solutions for users Department-wide. The CEC searched the email accounts associated with the Secretary of Agriculture, the Acting Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary's top advisors, including the Secretary's Chief of Staff, the Chief Information Officer, the Senior Advisor for Government Efficiency, the Chief Financial Officer, the General Counsel, and the Director of OBPA. No responsive records were located as a result of the CEC search. Therefore, we are unable to provide you with any agency records responsive to your request.

You may appeal this response by email at USDAFOIA@usda.gov. Your appeal must be in writing, and it must be received electronically no later than 90 calendar days from the date of this letter. The OIA will not consider appeals received after the 90 calendar-day limit. Appeals received after 5:00 p.m. EST will be considered received the next business day. The appeal letter should include the FOIA tracking number, a copy of the original request, the OIA's response to your original request, and a statement explaining the basis of your appeal. For quickest possible handling, the subject line of your email and the appeal letter should be marked "Freedom of Information Act Appeal" and reference FOIA No. 2025-OSEC-04631-F.

You may seek dispute resolution services from the OIA's FOIA Public Liaison, Ms. Melanie Enciso. Ms. Enciso may be contacted by telephone at (202) 720-9462, or electronically at Melanie.Enciso@usda.gov or USDAFOIA@usda.gov.

You also have the option to seek assistance from the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS). Please visit [Request OGIS Assistance | National Archives](#) for information about how to request OGIS assistance in relation to a FOIA request.

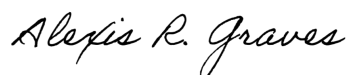
Provisions of the FOIA allow us to recover part of the cost of processing your request. In this instance, no fees will be charged.

If you have any questions regarding the processing of this request, please contact Susan Ruppel at 202-690-5220 or electronically at susan.ruppel@usda.gov or USDAFOIA@usda.gov.

For additional information regarding USDA FOIA regulations and processes, please refer to the information available online at [Freedom of Information Act Division | USDA](#).

The OIA appreciates the opportunity to assist you with this matter.

Sincerely,



Alexis R. Graves
Director
Office of Information Affairs