

February 24, 2014

Arnetta Mallory - FOIA Initiatives Coordinator  
National Security Division  
U.S. Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Room 6150  
Washington, DC 20530-0001

**BY EMAIL** — nsdfoia@usdoj.gov

RE: Freedom of Information Act Request and Request for Expedited Processing

Dear Ms. Mallory:

This letter constitutes an expedited request under the Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”), 5 U.S.C. § 552, and is submitted to the Department of Justice (“DOJ”), National Security Division (“NSD”) on behalf of the Electronic Frontier Foundation (“EFF”). EFF makes this request as part of its Transparency Project, which works to obtain government records and make those records widely available to the public.

EFF hereby requests the following records:

1. All written decisions, opinions, or orders issued by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court of Review (“FISCR”);
2. All written decisions, opinions, or orders issued by the Supreme Court in any case or matter appealed from the FISCR.

### **Request for Expedited Processing**

For the reasons discussed below, a “compelling need” exists for the records sought in this request, and, as such, EFF is entitled to expedited processing under 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(E)(v)(II) and 28 C.F.R. §§ 16.5(d)(1)(ii).

EFF is entitled to expedited processing because the request pertains to information about which there is an “urgency to inform the public about an actual or alleged federal government activity,” and the request is “made by a person primarily engaged in disseminating information.” 28 C.F.R. § 16.5(d)(1)(ii). The information we request satisfies this standard.

First, the records sought by this request undeniably concern a “federal government activity.” *Id.* The records requested here—appellate decisions concerning electronic surveillance conducted by the NSA—reflect both on the federal government’s operation of domestic electronic surveillance and on the judicial oversight of those surveillance activities.

Second, there is an “urgency to inform the public” about the federal government activity. *Id.*

The surveillance programs addressed in the requested records are being actively debated by both houses of Congress and are currently subject to at least ten bills pending in the House of Representatives<sup>1</sup> and nine bills pending in the Senate.<sup>2</sup> With Congressional debate surrounding the FISC the subject of such rigorous debate, the need to inform the public about the law governing the operation of government surveillance is imperative. The information we request will help the public and Congress fully understand the current state and legality of FISA surveillance, and to participate in the ongoing debate over whether to expand—or restrict—the oversight capacity of the courts. Delay in processing this FOIA request could inhibit the ability of Congress and the public to fully analyze and debate the implications of any changes to the statutory authority of the NSA or the FISC proposed in the bills currently being debated.

In two FOIA cases brought by EFF, the court found that requests warranted expedited treatment where Congress is considering legislation “and the records may enable the public to participate meaningfully in the debate over such pending legislation.” *EFF v. ODNI*, 542 F. Supp. 2d 1181, 1187 (N.D. Cal. 2008) (citing *EFF v. ODNI*, 2007 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 89585 (Nov. 27, 2007)). Even though the court could not “predict the timing of passage of the legislation” the court granted expedited processing, holding “that delayed disclosure of the requested materials may cause irreparable harm to a vested constitutional interest in ‘the uninhibited, robust, and wide-open debate about matters of public importance that secures an informed citizenry.’” *Id.* (citing *New York Times Co. v. Sullivan*, 376 U.S. 254, 270 (1964)). Similarly, there is an urgency to inform the public about the information we seek here.

Further, as explained below in support of our request for “news media” treatment, EFF is “primarily engaged in disseminating information” under 28 C.F.R. § 16.11(c)(1)(i).

Therefore, this request meets the standard for expedited processing set forth in 28 C.F.R. § 16.5(d)(1)(ii).

### **Request for News Media Fee Status**

EFF asks that it not be charged search or review fees for this request because EFF qualifies as a representative of the news media pursuant to the FOIA and 28 C.F.R. § 16.11(b)(6). In requesting this classification, we note that the Department of Homeland Security and National Security Agency, among other agencies, have recognized that EFF qualifies as a “news media” requester, based upon the publication activities set forth below (see DHS stipulation and NSA letter, attached hereto). We further note that the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit has stressed that “different agencies [must not] adopt inconsistent interpretations of the FOIA.” *Al-*

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<sup>1</sup> H.R. 2399 (LIBERT-E Act), H.R. 2440 (FISA Court in the Sunshine Act of 2013), H.R. 2475

<sup>2</sup> S. 1016 (Preserving Freedom from Unwarranted Surveillance Act of 2013), S. 1121 (Fourth Amendment Restoration Act of 2013), S. 1130 (Ending Secret Law Act), S. 1168 (Restore Our Privacy Act), S. 1182 (A bill to modify the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978), S. 1215 (FISA Accountability and Privacy Protection Act of 2013), S. 1452 (A bill to enhance transparency for certain surveillance programs authorized by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978), S. 1460 (FISA Judge Selection Reform Act of 2013), and S. 1467 (FISA Court Reform Act of 2013).

*Fayed v. CIA*, 254 F.3d 300, 307 (D.C. Cir. 2001), quoting *Pub. Citizen Health Research Group v. FDA*, 704 F.2d 1280, 1287 (D.C. Cir. 1983).

EFF is a non-profit public interest organization that works “to protect and enhance our core civil liberties in the digital age.”<sup>3</sup> One of EFF’s primary objectives is “to educate the press, policymakers and the general public about online civil liberties.”<sup>4</sup> To accomplish this goal, EFF routinely and systematically disseminates information in several ways.

First, EFF maintains a frequently visited web site, <http://www.eff.org>, which received 1,314,234 unique visitors in July 2013 — an average of 1,776 per hour. The web site reports the latest developments and contains in-depth information about a variety of civil liberties and intellectual property issues.

EFF has regularly published an online newsletter, the EFFector, since 1990. The EFFector currently has more than 235,000 subscribers. A complete archive of past EFFectors is available at <http://www.eff.org/effector/>.

Furthermore, EFF publishes a blog that highlights the latest news from around the Internet. DeepLinks (<http://www.eff.org/deeplinks/>) reports and analyzes newsworthy developments in technology. DeepLinks had 116,494 unique visitors in July 2013. EFF also maintains a presence on the social media networks Twitter (more than 150,000 followers), Facebook (more than 67,000 followers), and Google Plus (more than 2,000,000 followers).

In addition to reporting hi-tech developments, EFF staff members have presented research and in-depth analysis on technology issues in no fewer than forty white papers published since 2003. These papers, available at <http://www.eff.org/wp/>, provide information and commentary on such diverse issues as electronic voting, free speech, privacy and intellectual property.

EFF has also published several books to educate the public about technology and civil liberties issues. *Everybody’s Guide to the Internet* (MIT Press 1994), first published electronically as *The Big Dummy’s Guide to the Internet* in 1993, was translated into several languages, and is still sold by Powell’s Books (<http://www.powells.com>). EFF also produced *Protecting Yourself Online: The Definitive Resource on Safety, Freedom & Privacy in Cyberspace* (HarperEdge 1998), a “comprehensive guide to self-protection in the electronic frontier,” which can be purchased via Amazon.com (<http://www.amazon.com>). Finally, *Cracking DES: Secrets of Encryption Research, Wiretap Politics & Chip Design* (O’Reilly 1998) revealed technical details on encryption security to the public. The book is available online at <http://cryptome.org/cracking-des.htm> and for sale at Amazon.com.

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<sup>3</sup> Guidestar Nonprofit Report, Electronic Frontier Foundation, <https://www.guidestar.org/organizations/04-3091431/electronic-frontier-foundation.aspx> (last visited August 22, 2013).

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

## Request for a Public Interest Fee Waiver

EFF is entitled to a waiver of duplication fees because disclosure of the requested information is in the public interest within the meaning of 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(a)(iii) and 28 C.F.R. § 16.11(k)(1)(i), (ii). To determine whether a request meets this standard, the agency must assess whether “[d]isclosure of the requested information . . . is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government,” 28 C.F.R. § 16.11(k)(1)(i), and whether such disclosure “is not primarily in the commercial interest of the requester.” 28 C.F.R. § 16.11(k)(1)(ii). This request satisfies these criteria.

First, any FISC orders or opinions in the possession of DOJ NSD necessarily implicate “the operations or activities of the government.” 28 C.F.R. § 16.11(k)(1)(i). The opinions and orders concern domestic surveillance undertaken by the U.S. intelligence community.

Second, disclosure of the requested information will contribute to a public understanding of government operations or activities. *Id.* EFF has requested information that will shed light on the intelligence community’s interaction with the FISC in the implementation and transition of NSA surveillance activities to FISA Court oversight. This information will contribute not only to EFF’s understanding of surveillance activities and law, but also to the understanding of a reasonably broad audience of persons interested in the subject. EFF will make the information it obtains under the FOIA available to the public and the media through its web site and newsletter, which highlight developments concerning privacy and civil liberties issues, and/or other channels discussed more fully above.

Finally, since only limited information has been made available regarding the shift of NSA surveillance activities to FISC oversight, the disclosure will “contribute significantly” to the public’s knowledge and understanding of surveillance activities – and the legal basis for that surveillance – undertaken by the federal government. *Id.* Disclosure of the requested information will help inform the public about the legality of the intelligence community’s actions, as well as contribute to the public debate about proper reforms to such authority.

Furthermore, a fee waiver is appropriate here because EFF has no commercial interest in the disclosure of the requested records. 28 C.F.R. § 16.11(k)(1)(ii). EFF is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, and will derive no commercial benefit from the information at issue here.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at (415) 436-9333 x146. As the FOIA provides, I will anticipate a determination on this request for expedited processing within 10 calendar days.

I certify that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, all information within this request is true and correct.

Sincerely,

/s/ Mark Rumold

Mark Rumold  
Staff Attorney

Enclosures

# **ATTACHMENTS**



NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY  
CENTRAL SECURITY SERVICE  
FORT GEORGE G. MEADE, MARYLAND 20755-6000

FOIA Case: 52276  
6 February 2007

Ms. Marcia Hofmann  
Electronic Frontier Foundation  
1875 Connecticut Avenue, NW  
Suite 650  
Washington, DC 20009

Dear Ms. Hofmann:

This is an initial response to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request submitted via facsimile on 23 January 2007, which was received by this office on 24 January 2007, for all agency records (including, but not limited to, electronic records) related to the NSA's review of and input on the configuration of the Microsoft Windows Vista operating system ("Vista"). Your request has been assigned Case Number 52276.

As we began to process your request, we realized that the first page of the actual request was missing from your 18-page facsimile package. On 1 February 2007, a member of my staff contacted you to advise you of this fact. As a result, you submitted another facsimile of your original five-page request, which we received and have begun to process. There is certain information relating to this processing about which the FOIA and applicable Department of Defense (DoD) and NSA/CSS regulations require we inform you.

For purposes of this request and based on the information you provided in your letter, you are considered a representative of the media. Unless you qualify for a fee waiver or reduction, you must pay for duplication in excess of the first 100 pages. Your request for a fee waiver has been granted. In addition, please be advised your request for expedited treatment has been accepted. We are currently in the process of searching for responsive documents and will notify you of the status of your request as soon as that search has been completed.

Correspondence related to your request should include the case number assigned to your request, which is included in the first paragraph of this letter. Your letter should be addressed to National Security Agency, FOIA Office

(DC34), 9800 Savage Road STE 6248, Ft. George G. Meade, MD 20755-6248  
or may be sent by facsimile to 443-479-3612. If sent by fax, it should be  
marked for the attention of the FOIA office. The telephone number of the FOIA  
office is 301-688-6527.

Sincerely,

*for Marianne Stepan*

PAMELA N. PHILLIPS  
Chief  
FOIA/PA Office

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

ELECTRONIC FRONTIER )  
FOUNDATION )  
 )  
Plaintiff, )  
 )  
v. )  
 )  
DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND )  
SECURITY, )  
 )  
Defendant. )  
\_\_\_\_\_ )

Civil Action No. 06-1988 (ESH)

**STIPULATED DISMISSAL OF PLAINTIFF’S SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION**

Plaintiff Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) and Defendant Department of Homeland Security (DHS), by counsel, hereby stipulate and agree as follows:

1. Defendant DHS has granted news media status to Plaintiff EFF based on the representations contained in EFF’s FOIA requests, which demonstrate that EFF is an “entity that is organized and operated to publish or broadcast news to the public.” 6 C.F.R. § 5.11(b)(6). Defendant DHS will continue to regard Plaintiff EFF as a “representative of the news media” absent a change in circumstances that indicates that EFF is no longer an “entity that is organized and operated to publish or broadcast news to the public.” 6 C.F.R. § 5.11(b)(6).
2. Accordingly, the parties herewith agree to the dismissal of Plaintiff EFF’s Second Cause of Action, related to EFF’s status as a “representative of the news media.”
3. The parties further agree that each will pay its own fees and costs for work on the dismissed claim.

SO STIPULATED AND AGREED this 27<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2007.

/s/ David L. Sobel

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D.C. Bar 360418

MARCIA HOFMANN  
D.C. Bar 484136

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/s/ John R. Coleman

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