



August 8, 2024

Harry Duty
3697 Family Circle Road
Vernon, FL 32462

Dear Mr. Duty,

This letter responds to your citizen petition FDA-2022-P-0574, dated April 14, 2022. Your petition requests “FDA-CVM comply with FOIA law and post publicly on the FDA FOIA reading room all documents requested through various FOIA requests pertaining to FDA Employee Eric Nelson’s emails containing the key search term; AAFCO. This is for the date range of 05.01.2021 – 06.30.2021.”

As grounds for the petition, you state that “[t]he FOIA requires each agency to make available for public inspection, in electronic format, copies of all records that have previously been released under FOIA and ‘(I) that because of the nature of their subject matter, the agency determines have become or are likely to become the subject of subsequent requests for substantially the same records; or (II) that have been requested 3 or more times.’ 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(2)(D).”

You state that you are requesting “Eric Nelson’s emails containing the key search term, AAFCO. This is for the date range of 05.01.2021 – 06.30.2021.” You state that this “information has been requested through FOIA ‘3 or more times’ and FDA is now required to comply with 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(2)(D) and publish these records on the FDA FOIA reading room.”

Your request for FDA to make the above-referenced records available for public inspection in an electronic format is denied. 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(2)(D) states in part:

Each agency ... shall make available for public inspection in an electronic format ... copies of all records ... that have been released to any person under [FOIA]; and ... that have been requested 3 or more times[.]

Your petition did not provide the control numbers for the FOIA requests that you claim triggered this provision of the FOIA or any other information supporting your assertion that the emails “have been requested through FOIA ‘3 or more times’ and FDA is now required to comply with

5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(2)(D).” Therefore, your citizen petition does not include factual grounds supporting your contention that FDA is required to post the emails. 21 CFR 10.30(b)(3).¹

Nonetheless, when CVM determines that the posting requirement in 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(2)(D) has been triggered, it posts the records in accordance with that requirement. If we determine that there are records that have been requested 3 or more times and they have been released under FOIA, we intend to post the record to the CVM FOIA Electronic Reading Room. FDA is required to comply with the electronic and information technology requirements in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Pub. L. 93-112), section 508 [29 U.S.C. § 794d(a)], when posting records to our electronic reading room or elsewhere on our website. Section 508 requires us to ensure that individuals with disabilities have access to and use of these records. Once the records have been converted to a section 508-compliant format, we will post the record to the CVM FOIA Electronic Reading Room at: <https://www.fda.gov/about-fda/center-veterinary-medicine/cvm-foia-electronic-reading-room>.

For the reason(s) stated above, we are denying your petition.

Sincerely,

William T. Flynn, DVM, MS
Deputy Center Director
Center for Veterinary Medicine

¹ FDA regulations specify that a petition must request the Commissioner of Food and Drugs to “issue, amend, or revoke a regulation or order or take or refrain from taking any other form of administrative action.” 21 CFR 10.30(b)(3). Furthermore, a petition must contain “[a] full statement, in a well-organized format, of the factual and legal grounds on which the petitioner relies, including all relevant information and views on which the petitioner relies, as well as representative information known to the petitioner which is unfavorable to the petitioner’s position.” We note that in the past, FDA has granted at least some citizen petitions requesting that the Agency post records consistent with 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(2)(D) regardless of whether the petition alleged sufficient factual grounds for that request. We believe that the current approach is more appropriate in light of the text of 21 CFR 10.30(b)(3), and it will enable FDA to better serve the interests of all petitioners.