



FEMA

November 6, 2006

CERTIFIED MAIL: 70060810 0000 6079 5207

Mr. Mark Schleifstein
Environment Reporter
The Times-Picayune
3800 Howard Avenue
New Orleans, LA 70125

RE: Freedom of Information Act Request
FOIA Case No.: 06-021

Dear Mr. Schleifstein:

This letter is in reference to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request dated October 5, 2005. You had requested records concerning:

1. Any communications concerning the activation of a Rapid Needs Assessment Team or Teams for Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, including a list of the team members.
2. Any reports by, from or to those teams about the disaster-stricken area and the affected population, including , but not limited to, any recommendations as to the type and amount of help needed, also, copies of maps on which locations of observations were recorded.
3. Any notifications by FEMA regional director or other FEMA official of the setting of readiness levels, including the time of the notifications.
4. Any documents used in notifying Rapid Needs Assessment team leaders and members, and the Louisiana Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness, at the advisory, alert, activation and deployment levels, including the times they were sent.
5. Any documents outlining the information collected at the onset of the rapid-needs-assessment operation by FEMA and state RNA team leaders.
6. Any collection plan developed for getting an accurate assessment of immediate needs that was drawn up upon entering the disaster area.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS)/Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) have been inundated with FOIA requests related to the 2005 Hurricane Season. The responsive records for many of these requests are complex and extremely voluminous in nature, often requiring search and review of thousands of pages. In addition, the search for responsive documents often involves the need to search in

multiple FEMA offices located in Washington, DC and various Joint Field Offices and Regional Offices.

To make the most effective use of our FOIA processing time, given our limited personnel resources and large volume of pending FOIAs, we are attempting to eliminate any requests from our queue where the requester appears to have lost interest or can no longer be contacted. Consequently, I am contacting you to: (1) inform you of the status of your request; and (2) determine if you still wish to receive the subject information.

We currently have 226 FOIA cases in our non-expedited queue, of which there are 27 in front of yours.

Please (a) check the appropriate space on the enclosed form, (b) sign and date in the spaces provided, and (c) return it to us in the enclosed envelope. If we do not receive your response within 30 days from the date of this letter, we will conclude that you no longer desire the information and will close your request file.

Thank you for your interest in FEMA's programs and policies.

Sincerely,



Jeff Oval
Senior FOIA Specialist
Office of Chief Counsel

Enclosure: (1) FEMA Continued Interest Form and return envelope