



U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission

100 F Street, NE

Washington, DC 20549

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (FOIA)

Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2021

(October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2021)

FOIA ANNUAL REPORT

FOR
10/01/2020
THROUGH
09/30/2021

The following **Annual Freedom of Information Act** report covers the Period 10/01/2020 through 09/30/2021, as required by 5 U.S.C. 552.

I. BASIC INFORMATION REGARDING REPORT

1. Questions concerning this report may be directed to:

Ray McInerney
Freedom of Information Act Officer
U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)
100 F Street, NE
Washington, DC 20549

2. This report is available on the SEC's Web site: <http://www.sec.gov/foia/arfoia21.pdf>.
3. To obtain a paper copy of this report, send a letter to the FOIA Officer at the address above or via email to foiapa@sec.gov.

II. MAKING A FOIA REQUEST

1. Address of office that receives FOIA requests:

The Commission's FOIA Office is centralized. FOIA requests are considered received by the SEC only when they reach the Office of FOIA Services (see 17 CFR 200.80 (b)). Written requests should be submitted to the FOIA Officer at:

SEC.gov
[National FOIA Portal](#)
E-mail: foiapa@sec.gov
Fax: 202-772-9337
Mail: Office of FOIA Services, U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission
100 F Street, NE, Suite 2465 Washington, DC 20549

2. Description of why some requests are not granted: Many requests received by the SEC are for investigatory records, consumer complaints, and non-public correspondence. Some of these requests are denied because the records are related to on-going investigations (Exemption 7(A)), personal privacy (Exemptions 6 and 7(C)), and protected intra and inter-agency records (Exemption 5). The majority of FOIA requests to the Commission are from entities 1) providing investor-related services, such as due diligence and background checks on companies, 2) providing services that offer registration-related filings, and 3) seeking evidence of investigative proceedings. These requests often result in a finding of no records or "no information found" which is the most common disposition for requests to the Commission.
3. A link to the SEC's FOIA regulations and Fee Schedule are available on the SEC's Web site:
<https://www.sec.gov/oso/foia-relevant-foia-docs.html>.

III. ACRONYMS, DEFINITIONS, AND EXEMPTIONS

1. Provide any agency-specific acronyms or terms used in this Report.
2. Include the following definitions of terms used in this Report:
 - a. **Administrative Appeal** - a request to a federal agency asking that it review at a higher administrative level a FOIA determination made by the agency at the initial request level.
 - b. **Average Number** - the number obtained by dividing the sum of a group of numbers by the quantity of numbers in the group. For example, of 3, 7, and 14, the average number is 8.
 - c. **Backlog** - the number of requests or administrative appeals that are pending at an agency at the end of the fiscal year that are beyond the statutory time period for a response.
 - d. **Component** - for agencies that process requests on a decentralized basis, a "component" is an entity, also sometimes referred to as an Office, Division, Bureau, Center, or Directorate, within the agency that processes FOIA requests. The FOIA now requires that agencies include in their Annual FOIA Report data for both the agency overall and for each principal component of the agency.
 - e. **Consultation** - the procedure whereby the agency responding to a FOIA request first forwards a record to another agency for its review because that other agency has an interest in the document. Once the agency in receipt of the consultation finishes its review of the record, it responds back to the agency that forwarded it. That agency, in turn, will then respond to the FOIA requester.
 - f. **Exemption 3 Statute** - a federal statute that exempts information from disclosure and which the agency relies on to withhold information under subsection (b)(3) of the FOIA.
 - g. **FOIA Request** - a FOIA request is generally a request to a federal agency for access to records concerning another person (i.e., a "third-party" request), or concerning an organization, or a particular topic of interest. FOIA requests also include requests made by requesters seeking records concerning themselves (i.e., "first-party" requests) when those requesters are not subject to the Privacy Act, such as non-U.S. citizens. Moreover, because all first-party requesters should be afforded the benefit of both the access provisions of

the FOIA as well as those of the Privacy Act, FOIA requests also include any first-party requests where an agency determines that it must search beyond its Privacy Act "systems of records" or where a Privacy Act exemption applies, and the agency looks to FOIA to afford the greatest possible access. All requests which require the agency to utilize the FOIA in responding to the requester are included in this Report.

Additionally, a FOIA request includes records referred to the agency for processing and direct response to the requester. It does not, however, include records for which the agency has received a consultation from another agency. (Consultations are reported separately in Section XII of this Report.)

- h. **Full Grant** - an agency decision to disclose all records in full in response to a FOIA request.
- i. **Full Denial** - an agency decision not to release any records in response to a FOIA request because the records are exempt in their entireties under one or more of the FOIA exemptions, or because of a procedural reason, such as when no records could be located.
- j. **Median Number** - the middle, not average, number. For example, of 3, 7, and 14, the median number is 7.
- k. **Multi-Track Processing** - a system in which simple requests requiring relatively minimal review are placed in one processing track and more voluminous and complex requests are placed in one or more other tracks. Requests granted expedited processing are placed in yet another track. Requests in each track are processed on a first in/first out basis.
 - i. **Expedited Processing** - an agency will process a FOIA request on an expedited basis when a requester satisfies the requirements for expedited processing as set forth in the statute and in agency regulations.
 - ii. **Simple Request** - a FOIA request that an agency using multi-track processing places in its fastest (non-expedited) track based on the low volume and/or simplicity of the records requested.
 - iii. **Complex Request** - a FOIA request that an agency using multi-track processing places in a slower track based on the high volume and/or complexity of the records requested.
- l. **Partial Grant/Partial Denial** - in response to a FOIA request, an agency decision to disclose portions of the records and to withhold other portions that are exempt under the FOIA, or to otherwise deny a portion of the request for a procedural reason.
- m. **Pending Request or Pending Administrative Appeal** - a request or administrative appeal for which an agency has not taken final action in all respects.
- n. **Perfect Request** - a request for records which reasonably describes such records and is made in accordance with published rules stating the time, place, fees (if any) and procedures to be followed.
- o. **Processed Request or Processed Administrative Appeal** - a request or administrative appeal for which an agency has taken final action in all respects.

- p. **Range in Number of Days** - the lowest and highest number of days to process requests or administrative appeals.
 - q. **Time Limits** - the time period in the statute for an agency to respond to a FOIA request (ordinarily twenty working days from receipt of a perfected FOIA request).
3. Include the following concise descriptions of the nine FOIA exemptions:
- a. **Exemption 1:** classified national defense and foreign relations information
 - b. **Exemption 2:** internal agency rules and practices
 - c. **Exemption 3:** information that is prohibited from disclosure by another federal law
 - d. **Exemption 4:** trade secrets and other confidential business information
 - e. **Exemption 5:** inter-agency or intra-agency communications that are protected by legal privileges
 - f. **Exemption 6:** information involving matters of personal privacy
 - g. **Exemption 7:** records or information compiled for law enforcement purposes, to the extent that the production of those records (A) could reasonably be expected to interfere with enforcement proceedings, (B) would deprive a person of a right to a fair trial or an impartial adjudication, (C) could reasonably be expected to constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy, (D) could reasonably be expected to disclose the identity of a confidential source, (E) would disclose techniques and procedures for law enforcement investigations or prosecutions, or would disclose guidelines for law enforcement investigations or prosecutions, or (F) could reasonably be expected to endanger the life or physical safety of any individual
 - h. **Exemption 8:** information relating to the supervision of financial institutions
 - i. **Exemption 9:** geological information on wells

IV. Exemption 3 Statutes

Statute	Type of Information Withheld	Case Citation	Agency / Component	Number of Times Relied upon by Agency / Component	Total Number of Times Relied upon by Agency Overall
15 U.S.C. § 78q(h)(5)	Associated persons of broker-dealers, government securities brokers or dealers, or municipal securities dealers	N/A	SEC	1	1
41 U.S.C. § 2102 (amending 41 U.S.C. § 423(a)(1))* (Procurement Integrity Act)	Contractor bid or proposal information; source selection information	Legal & Safety Employer Research Inc. v. U.S. Dep't of the Army, No. Civ. S001748, 2001 WL 34098652, at *3-4 (E.D. Cal. May 4, 2001) (dictum).	SEC	4	4
15 U.S.C. § 78x(d)	Foreign Securities Authorities	N/A	SEC	12	12
15 U.S.C. § 78u-6	Information that could identify a whistleblower	N/A	SEC	64	64
15 U.S. C. § 80b4	Reports by Investment Adviser	N/A	SEC	1	1
5 U.S.C. app. 4 § 107(a)(2) (Ethics in Government Act of 1978)	Confidential financial disclosure information pertaining to certain government employees	Meyerhoff v. EPA, 958 F.2d 1498, 1500-02 (9th Cir. 1992); Boyd v Exec. Office for U.S. Attorneys, 161 F. Supp. 3d 1, 7 (D.D.C. 2015); Seife v NIH, 874 F. Supp. 2d 248, 254 (S.D.N.Y. 2012).	SEC	1	1
15 U.S.C. § 7215(b)(5)	Prohibits disclosure of records prepared or received by or specifically for the PCAOB	N/A	SEC	2	2
15 U.S.C. § 78m(h)(7)	Information and documents included in or filed with an application or registration statement, or annual reports filed, by issuers of security registered pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 78l.	N/A	SEC	1	1

V.A. FOIA REQUESTS -- RECEIVED, PROCESSED AND PENDING FOIA REQUESTS

Agency / Component	Number of Requests Pending as of Start of Fiscal Year	Number of Requests Received in Fiscal Year	Number of Requests Processed in Fiscal Year	Number of Requests Pending as of End of Fiscal Year
SEC	641	12,363	12,171	833
AGENCY OVERALL	641	12,363	12,171	833

V.B.(1). DISPOSITION OF FOIA REQUESTS -- ALL PROCESSED REQUESTS

Agency / Component	Number of Full Grants	Number of Partial Grants / Partial Denials	Number of Full Denials Based on Exemptions	Number of Full Denials Based on Reasons Other than Exemptions									TOTAL
				No Records	All Records Referred to Another Component or Agency	Request Withdrawn	Fee-Related Reason	Records not Reasonably Described	Improper FOIA Request for Other Reason	Not Agency Record	Duplicate Request	Other *Explain in Chart Below	
SEC	3,883	787	1,006	5,574	80	492	23	25	33	68	200	0	12,171
AGENCY OVERALL	3,883	787	1,006	5,574	80	492	23	25	33	68	200	0	12,171

V.B.(2). DISPOSITION OF FOIA REQUESTS -- "OTHER" REASONS FOR "FULL DENIALS BASED ON REASONS OTHER THAN EXEMPTIONS"

Agency / Component	Description of "Other" Reasons for Denials from Chart B(1)	Number of Times "Other" Reason Was Relied Upon	TOTAL
SEC	N/A	0	0
AGENCY OVERALL			0

V.B.(3). DISPOSITION OF FOIA REQUESTS -- NUMBER OF TIMES EXEMPTIONS APPLIED

Agency / Component	Ex. 1	Ex. 2	Ex. 3	Ex. 4	Ex. 5	Ex. 6	Ex. 7(A)	Ex. 7(B)	Ex. 7(C)	Ex. 7(D)	Ex. 7(E)	Ex. 7(F)	Ex. 8	Ex. 9
SEC	0	2	86	436	247	568	480	3	367	63	44	1	42	0
AGENCY OVERALL	0	2	86	436	247	568	480	3	367	63	44	1	42	0

VI.A. ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS OF INITIAL DETERMINATIONS OF FOIA REQUESTS -- RECEIVED, PROCESSED, AND PENDING ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS

Agency / Component	Number of Appeals Pending as of Start of Fiscal Year	Number of Appeals Received in Fiscal Year	Number of Appeals Processed in Fiscal Year	Number of Appeals Pending as of End of Fiscal Year
SEC	1	647	645	3
AGENCY OVERALL	1	647	645	3

VI.B. DISPOSITION OF ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS -- ALL PROCESSED APPEALS

Agency / Component	Number Affirmed on Appeal	Number Partially Affirmed & Partially Reversed/Remanded on Appeal	Number Completely Reversed/Remanded on Appeal	Number of Appeals Closed for Other Reasons	TOTAL
SEC	495	55	73	22	645
AGENCY OVERALL	495	55	73	22	645

VI.C.(1). REASONS FOR DENIAL ON APPEAL -- NUMBER OF TIMES EXEMPTIONS APPLIED

Agency / Component	Ex. 1	Ex. 2	Ex. 3	Ex. 4	Ex. 5	Ex. 6	Ex. 7(A)	Ex. 7(B)	Ex. 7(C)	Ex. 7(D)	Ex. 7(E)	Ex. 7(F)	Ex. 8	Ex. 9
SEC	0	0	0	3	142	27	236	1	23	0	0	0	4	0
AGENCY OVERALL	0	0	0	3	142	27	236	1	23	0	0	0	4	0

VI.C.(2). REASONS FOR DENIAL ON APPEAL -- REASONS OTHER THAN EXEMPTIONS

Agency / Component	No Records	Records Referred at Initial Request Level	Request Withdrawn	Fee-Related Reason	Records not Reasonably Described	Improper Request for Other Reasons	Not Agency Record	Duplicate Request or Appeal	Request in Litigation	Appeal Based Solely on Denial of Request for Expedited Processing	Other *Explain in chart below
SEC	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	10
AGENCY OVERALL	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	10

VI.C.(3). REASONS FOR DENIAL ON APPEAL -- "OTHER" REASONS

Agency / Component	Description of "Other" Reasons for Denial on Appeal from Chart C(2)	Number of Times "Other" Reason Was Relied Upon	TOTAL
SEC	Moot	4	10
	Untimely	6	
AGENCY OVERALL			10

VI.C.(4). RESPONSE TIME FOR ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS

Agency / Component	Median Number of Days	Average Number of Days	Lowest Number of Days	Highest Number of Days
SEC	7	10.68	<1	148
AGENCY OVERALL	7	10.68	<1	148

VI.C.(5). TEN OLDEST PENDING ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS

Agency / Component		10th Oldest Appeal	9th	8th	7th	6th	5th	4th	3rd	2nd	Oldest Appeal
SEC	Date of Appeal	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2021-09-30	2021-09-08	2021-07-08
	Number of Days Pending	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	16	60
AGENCY OVERALL	Date of Appeal	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2021-09-30	2021-09-08	2021-07-08
	Number of Days Pending	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	16	60

VII.A. FOIA REQUESTS -- RESPONSE TIME FOR ALL PROCESSED PERFECTED REQUESTS

Agency / Component	SIMPLE				COMPLEX				EXPEDITED PROCESSING			
	Median Number of Days	Average Number of Days	Lowest Number of Days	Highest Number of Days	Median Number of Days	Average Number of Days	Lowest Number of Days	Highest Number of Days	Median Number of Days	Average Number of Days	Lowest Number of Days	Highest Number of Days
SEC	7	16.23	<1	524	670	697	1	1,285	93	123	35	273
AGENCY OVERALL	7	16.23	<1	524	670	697	1	1,285	93	123	35	273

VII.B. PROCESSED REQUESTS -- RESPONSE TIME FOR PERFECTED REQUESTS IN WHICH INFORMATION WAS GRANTED

Agency / Component	SIMPLE				COMPLEX				EXPEDITED PROCESSING			
	Median Number of Days	Average Number of Days	Lowest Number of Days	Highest Number of Days	Median Number of Days	Average Number of Days	Lowest Number of Days	Highest Number of Days	Median Number of Days	Average Number of Days	Lowest Number of Days	Highest Number of Days
SEC	7	17.1	<1	524	689	821	532	1285	162	162.33	52	273
AGENCY OVERALL	7	17.1	<1	524	689	821	532	1285	162	162.33	52	273

VII.C. PROCESSED SIMPLE REQUESTS -- RESPONSE TIME IN DAY INCREMENTS

Agency / Component	<1-20 Days	21-40 Days	41-60 Days	61-80 Days	81-100 Days	101-120 Days	121-140 Days	141-160 Days	161-180 Days	181-200 Days	201-300 Days	301-400 Days	401+ Days	TOTAL
SEC	10,264	916	271	165	125	79	69	53	32	24	53	28	12	12,091
AGENCY OVERALL	10,264	916	271	165	125	79	69	53	32	24	53	28	12	12,091

VII.C. PROCESSED COMPLEX REQUESTS -- RESPONSE TIME IN DAY INCREMENTS

Agency / Component	<1-20 Days	21-40 Days	41-60 Days	61-80 Days	81-100 Days	101-120 Days	121-140 Days	141-160 Days	161-180 Days	181-200 Days	201-300 Days	301-400 Days	401+ Days	TOTAL
SEC	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	17
AGENCY OVERALL	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	17

VII.C. PROCESSED REQUESTS GRANTED EXPEDITED PROCESSING -- RESPONSE TIME IN DAY INCREMENTS

Agency / Component	<1-20 Days	21-40 Days	41-60 Days	61-80 Days	81-100 Days	101-120 Days	121-140 Days	141-160 Days	161-180 Days	181-200 Days	201-300 Days	301-400 Days	401+ Days	TOTAL
SEC	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	5
AGENCY OVERALL	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	5

II.D. PENDING REQUESTS -- ALL PENDING PERFECTED REQUESTS

Agency / Component	SIMPLE			COMPLEX			EXPEDITED PROCESSING		
	Number Pending	Median Number of Days	Average Number of Days	Number Pending	Median Number of Days	Average Number of Days	Number Pending	Median Number of Days	Average Number of Days
SEC	831	23	54	2	660	660	0	N/A	N/A
AGENCY OVERALL	831	23	54	2	660	660	0	N/A	N/A

VII.E. PENDING REQUESTS -- TEN OLDEST PENDING PERFECTED REQUESTS

Agency / Component		10th Oldest Request	9th	8th	7th	6th	5th	4th	3rd	2nd	Oldest Request
SEC	Date of Receipt	2020-08-25	2020-08-10	2020-08-03	2020-04-29	2020-04-06	2020-02-10	2020-01-21	2019-09-26	2018-09-10	2017-07-07
	Number of Days Pending	271	282	287	352	375	408	422	496	756	1,048
AGENCY OVERALL	Date of Receipt	2020-08-25	2020-08-10	2020-08-03	2020-04-29	2020-04-06	2020-02-10	2020-01-21	2019-09-26	2018-09-10	2017-07-07
	Number of Days Pending	271	282	287	352	375	408	422	496	756	1,048

VIII.A. REQUESTS FOR EXPEDITED PROCESSING

Agency / Component	Number Granted	Number Denied	Median Number of Days to Adjudicate	Average Number of Days to Adjudicate	Number Adjudicated Within Ten Calendar Days
SEC	1	354	2	2.94	352
AGENCY OVERALL	1	354	2	2.94	352

VIII.B. Requests for Fee Waiver

Agency / Component	Number Granted	Number Denied	Median Number of Days to Adjudicate	Average Number of Days to Adjudicate
SEC	96	422	2	2.13
AGENCY OVERALL	96	422	2	2.13

IX. FOIA Personnel and Costs

Agency / Component	PERSONNEL			COSTS		
	Number of "Full-Time FOIA Employees"	Number of "Equivalent Full-Time FOIA Employees"	Total Number of "Full-Time FOIA Staff"	Processing Costs	Litigation-Related Costs	Total Costs
SEC	26	7.30	33.30	\$9,273,658.67	\$199,884.00	\$9,473,542.67
AGENCY OVERALL	26	7.30	33.30	\$9,273,658.67	\$199,884.00	\$9,473,542.67

X. Fees Collected for Processing Requests

Agency / Component	Total Amount of Fees Collected	Percentage of Total Costs
SEC	\$7,711.01	0.0800
AGENCY OVERALL	\$7,711.01	0.0800

XI.A. Number of Times Subsection (C) Used

Agency / Component	Number of Times Subsection Used
SEC	19
AGENCY OVERALL	19

XI.B. Number of Subsection (A)(2) Postings

Agency / Component	Number of Records Posted by the FOIA Office	Number of Records Posted by Program Offices
SEC	68	794,743
AGENCY OVERALL	68	794,743

XII.D.(1). COMPARISON OF NUMBERS OF REQUESTS FROM PREVIOUS AND CURRENT ANNUAL REPORT -- REQUESTS RECEIVED AND PROCESSED

Agency / Component	NUMBER OF REQUESTS <u>RECEIVED</u>		NUMBER OF REQUESTS <u>PROCESSED</u>	
	Number Received During Fiscal Year from Last Year's Annual Report	Number Received During Fiscal Year from Current Annual Report	Number Processed During Fiscal Year from Last Year's Annual Report	Number Processed During Fiscal Year from Current Annual Report
SEC	13,300	12,363	13,258	12,171
AGENCY OVERALL	13,300	12,363	13,258	12,171

XII.D.(2). COMPARISON OF NUMBERS OF REQUESTS FROM PREVIOUS AND CURRENT ANNUAL REPORT -- BACKLOGGED REQUESTS

Agency / Component	Number of Backlogged Requests as of End of the Fiscal Year from Previous Annual Report	Number of Backlogged Requests as of End of the Fiscal Year from Current Annual Report
SEC	183	342
AGENCY OVERALL	183	342

XII.E.(1). COMPARISON OF NUMBERS OF ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS FROM PREVIOUS AND CURRENT ANNUAL REPORT -- APPEALS RECEIVED AND PROCESSED

Agency / Component	NUMBER OF APPEALS <u>RECEIVED</u>		NUMBER OF APPEALS <u>PROCESSED</u>	
	Number Received During Fiscal Year from Last Year's Annual Report	Number Received During Fiscal Year from Current Annual Report	Number Processed During Fiscal Year from Last Year's Annual Report	Number Processed During Fiscal Year from Current Annual Report
SEC	585	647	599	645
AGENCY OVERALL	585	647	599	645

XII.E.(2). COMPARISON OF NUMBERS OF ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS FROM PREVIOUS AND CURRENT ANNUAL REPORT -- BACKLOGGED APPEALS

Agency / Component	Number of Backlogged Appeals as of End of the Fiscal Year from Previous Annual Report	Number of Backlogged Appeals as of End of the Fiscal Year from Current Annual Report
SEC	0	1
AGENCY OVERALL	0	1