

March 18, 2005

Ms. Sue Ellen Sloca
Office of the Secretary
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

BY FAX: 202-219-2374

Re: Freedom of Information Act Request

Dear Ms. Sloca:

Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington ("CREW") makes this request for records, regardless of format, medium, or physical characteristics, and including electronic records and information, audiotapes, videotapes and photographs, pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA"), 5 U.S.C. §552, et seq.

This request relates to any contact, dating from January 1, 2001, to the present, that any office of the Department of the Interior may have had, including any and all field offices, with Jack Abramoff, any employee of the firm Greenberg Traurig, any employee of the firm Preston Gates, Michael Scanlon, any officer or employee of Capitol Campaign Strategies, James Dobson, Ralph Reed, Scott Reed, Italia Federici, any officer or employee of the Council of Republicans for Environmental Advocacy, any officer or employee of the National Center of Public Policy Research, Grover Norquist, any officer or employee of Americans for Tax Reform, General Services Administration Chief of Staff David Safavian, Congressman Robert Ney, any employee in the office of Congressman Ney, Congressman Tom DeLay, any employee in the office of Congressman DeLay or in the office of the Majority Leader, Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert, any employee in the office of Congressman Hastert or in the office of the Speaker of the House, Senator Conrad Burns, and any employee in the office of Senator Burns, concerning any matter within the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

This request further includes any records, dating from January 1, 2001, to the present, from any office of the Department of the Interior including but not limited to the Office of the Secretary, the Office of the Deputy Secretary and the Bureau of Indian Affairs regarding the Agua Caliente Tribe of Palm Springs, California, the Tigua Tribe of El Paso, Texas, the Saginaw Chippewa Tribe of Michigan, the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, the Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana, and the Jena Band of Choctaw Indians.

Specifically, we request the release of any records that reflect any contact between any and all offices of the Department of the Interior and any and all individuals within those offices, including but not limited to Secretary Gale Norton and former Deputy Secretary J. Steven Griles, and the above-delineated individuals and entities, regardless of who initiated the contact, as well as the substance of all such contacts.

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We also request any documents, regardless of format, medium or physical characteristics, that were provided to any office of the Department of the Interior by Jack Abramoff, any employee of the firm Greenberg Traurig, any employee of the firm Preston Gates, Michael Scanlon, any officer or employee of Capitol Campaign Strategies, James Dobson, Ralph Reed, Scott Reed, Italia Federici, any officer or employee of the Council of Republicans for Environmental Advocacy, any officer or employee of the National Center of Public Policy Research, Grover Norquist, any officer or employee of Americans for Tax Reform, former General Services Administration Chief of Staff David Safavian, Congressman Robert Ney, any employee in the office of Congressman Ney, Congressman Tom DeLay, any employee in the office of Congressman DeLay or in the office of the Majority Leader, Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert, any employee in the office of Congressman Hastert or in the office of the Speaker of the House, Senator Conrad Burns, and any employee in the office of Senator Burns concerning any matter within the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. As used in this request “and” also means “or,” and “or” also means “and.” As used in this request, “any matter within the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Indian Affairs” includes, but is not limited to, any matter also within the jurisdiction of the Office of the Secretary.

Please search for responsive records regardless of format, medium, or physical characteristics. We seek records of any kind, including electronic records, audiotapes, videotapes, and photographs. Our request includes any telephone messages, voice mail messages, daily agenda and calendars, information about scheduled meetings and/or discussions, whether in-person or over the telephone, agendas for those meetings and/or discussions, participants included in those meetings and/or discussions, minutes of any such meetings and/or discussions, the topics discussed at those meetings and/or discussions, e-mail regarding meetings and/or discussions, e-mail or facsimiles sent as a result of those meetings and/or discussions, and transcripts and notes of any such meetings and/or discussions.

If it is your position that any portion of the requested records is exempt from disclosure, CREW requests that you provide it with an index of those documents as required under Vaughn v. Rosen, 484 F.2d 820 (D.C. Cir. 1973), cert. denied, 415 U.S. 977 (1972). As you are aware, a Vaughn index must describe each document claimed as exempt with sufficient specificity “to permit a reasoned judgment as to whether the material is actually exempt under FOIA.” Founding Church of Scientology v. Bell, 603 F.2d 945, 949 (D.C. Cir. 1979). Moreover, the Vaughn index must “describe **each** document or portion thereof withheld, and for **each** withholding it must discuss the consequences of supplying the sought-after information.” King v. U.S. Dep’t of Justice, 830 F.2d 210, 223-24 (D.C. Cir. 1987) (*emphasis added*). Further, “the withholding agency must supply ‘a relatively detailed justification, specifically identifying the reasons why a particular exemption is relevant and correlating those claims with the particular

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part of a withheld document to which they apply.” *Id.* at 224 (citing Mead Data Central v. U.S. Dep’t of the Air Force, 566 F.2d 242, 251 (D.C. Cir. 1977)).

In the event that some portions of the requested records are properly exempt from disclosure, please disclose any reasonably segregable non-exempt portions of the requested records. *See* 5 U.S.C. §552(b) (“Any reasonably segregable portion of a record shall be provided to any person requesting such record after deletion of the portions which are exempt”); *see also* Schiller v. Nat’l Labor Relations Bd., 964 F.2d 1205, 1209 (D.C. Cir. 1992). If it is your position that a document contains non-exempt segments, but that those non-exempt segments are so dispersed throughout the document as to make segregation impossible, please state what portion of the document is non-exempt and how the material is dispersed throughout the document. Mead Data Central, 566 F.2d at 261. Claims of nonsegregability must be made with the same degree of detail as required for claims of exemptions in a Vaughn index. If a request is denied in whole, please state specifically that it is not reasonable to segregate portions of the record for release.

Fee Waiver Request

In accordance with 5 U.S.C. §552(a)(4)(A)(iii), CREW requests a waiver of fees associated with processing this request for records. The subject of this request concerns the operations of the federal government and the disclosures will likely contribute to a better understanding of relevant government procedures by CREW and the general public in a significant way. Moreover, the request is primarily and fundamentally for non-commercial purposes. 5 U.S.C. §552(a)(4)(A)(iii). *See, e.g.*, McClellan Ecological v. Carlucci, 835 F.2d 1282, 1285 (9th Cir. 1987). Specifically, these records are likely to contribute to the public’s understanding of the process used by the Department of the Interior to approve tribal bids for casinos on Indian lands.

CREW is a non-profit corporation, organized under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue code. CREW is committed to the protection of the citizen’s right to be aware of the activities of government officials and to ensuring the integrity of those officials. CREW is dedicated to empowering citizens to have an influential voice in government decisions and in the governmental decision-making process. CREW uses a combination of research, litigation, and advocacy to advance its mission. The release of information garnered through this request is not in CREW’s financial interest. CREW will analyze the information responsive to this request, and will likely share its analysis with the public, either through memorandums, reports or press releases.

Under these circumstances, CREW fully satisfies the criteria for a fee waiver.

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Conclusion

Please respond to this request in writing within twenty (20) days as required under 5 U.S.C. §552(a)(6)(A)(I). If all of the requested documents are not available within that time period, CREW requests that you provide it with all requested documents or portions of documents which are available within that time period.

If you have any questions about this request or foresee problems in releasing fully the requested records within the twenty-day period, please call me within that time period. I can be reached at (202) 588-5565. Also, if CREW's request for a fee waiver is not granted in full, please contact me immediately upon making such a determination. Please send the requested documents to Melanie Sloan, Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, 11 Dupont Circle, N.W., 2nd Floor, Washington, D.C. 20036.

Sincerely,

Melanie Sloan
Executive Director

cc: Bureau of Indian Affairs