

The 2010 Chief FOIA Officer Report for the United States International Trade Commission

I. Steps Taken to Apply the Presumption of Openness

1. Description

The USITC prides itself on its commitment to transparency and openness. The agency has for several years made its docket available on the Web and this past year re-organized its website in response to comments submitted by users.

Specifically the electronic docket, in addition to providing public documents in pdf format and metadata regarding other documents, now includes policy documents and user guides in addition to help screens with in the applications. Documents posted to the website are organized by subject or interest area. In the past, the website was organized along operational lines.

2. Disclosure Comparisons

In FY2009 the USITC increased the number of requests where records were released in full or in part when compared to the previous year. Either a full or partial release was granted with respect to (54%, 18 full, 9 partial out of 50 total) of the agency requests in FY2009. In FY 2008 a full or partial release was granted with respect to 46% (30 full, 1 partial out of 67 total) of the agency requests.

II. Steps Taken to Ensure that your Agency has an Effective System for Responding to FOIA Requests

The web browser interface and FOIA database were developed by our IT staff to our specifications. IT staff also developed custom reports for our use. IT staff frequently follows-up with us regarding operations and utility of the systems.

This past year the FOIA office at the USITC has become more aggressive in following-up with the program offices regarding responses. Also this past year we started development of a new FOIA handbook explaining FOIA office actions as well as program office responsibilities.

III. Steps Taken to Increase Proactive Disclosure

The USITC always been proactive in posting material on its website. This past year we developed procedures to provide predictability to the public by establishing webposting times for certain types of documents.

Page 2- Chief FOIA Officers Report for the United States International Trade Commission

IV. Steps Taken to Greater Utilize Technology

1. Does your agency currently receive requests electronically?

Yes. For the past several years the USITC has provided an electronic FOIA interface for the public; requestors can file electronically.

2. N/A

3. Does your agency track requests electronically?

The USITC tracks its FOIA requests electronically using an internal Microsoft Access database designed by our office and our IT support staff.

4. N/A

5. Does your agency use technology to process requests?

The USITC generally does not utilize technology to process requests. We decided against purchase of redaction software based on the limited number of partial releases.

We make every effort to provide requestors with releasable records in the format they have specified.

6. N/A

7. Does your agency use utilize technology to prepare your agency Annual FOIA Report?

The USITC utilizes technology in preparation of the agency annual FOIA report. Summary data used to populate the annual report is generated from the Microsoft Access database.

8. N/A

Page 3- Chief FOIA Officers Report for the United States International Trade Commission

V. Steps Taken to Reduce Backlogs and Improve Timeliness in Responding to Requests

1. Backlog Status

The USITC in general usually does not have a backlog of FOIA requests. There was no backlog in either FY 2008 or FY 2009.

2. Backlog Reduction Steps

N/A

3. Steps to Improve Timeliness

Our efforts to improve timeliness include educating staff regarding FOIA requirements, explaining our processing steps, and sending e-mail alerts to staff that a FOIA request is being assigned to them.