

**Department of the Interior**  
**Final FOIA Reading Room Certification**

The Department of the Interior (DOI) Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Program is highly decentralized and geographically dispersed. It is staffed at the Department and bureau levels, both in Headquarters and the field. There are eleven bureau/office FOIA Officers who are responsible for implementing the FOIA program within their respective bureaus/offices:

**Bureaus/Offices**

Office of the Secretary (OS)	Minerals Management Service (MMS)
Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)	Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS)	Office of Inspector General (OIG)
National Park Service (NPS)	Office of the Solicitor (SOL)
Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)	Office of Surface Mining (OSM)
U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)	

**Internal Review of DOI Reading Rooms**

In response to the Department of Justice's June 25, 2008 memorandum, the Chief FOIA Officer, Office of the Chief Information Officer, asked each bureau/office to review its reading room(s) and complete a Reading Room Certification form which requested the following information:

- Number of Reading Room(s) and their location(s);
- Brief description of deficiencies identified and whether they were corrected;
- Do the Reading Rooms contain final opinions and orders made in the adjudication of cases?
- Do the Reading Rooms contain bureau policy statements adopted and not published in the Federal Register?
- Do the Reading Rooms contain administrative staff manuals/instructions affecting the public?
- Do the Reading Rooms contain frequently requested FOIA documents?

The bureau FOIA Officers are responsible for reviewing their own reading room(s) and certifying that they are in compliance. With the exception of BLM and MMS, the other bureaus/offices maintain one FOIA reading room at Headquarters. Each BLM State Office (see attached list) has a reading room in addition to one at headquarters (total of 14; all were reviewed). MMS has two reading rooms, one in Headquarters and one in New Orleans (both were reviewed).

Additionally, the DOI FOIA Office reviewed the Department's Electronic Reading Room located at [www.doi.gov/foia/readroom.html](http://www.doi.gov/foia/readroom.html) to ensure it is in compliance, and identified and corrected any deficiencies noted.

## Description of Reading Room Deficiencies Identified and Addressed

- Broken and incorrect links
- Links to old information and/or documents
- Links to internal directives missing
- Policy statements and/or administrative staff manuals were not included in the reading room and/or were not clearly identified
- Frequently requested documents were listed in an index of records that could be requested from the bureau FOIA office; the actual documents were not available for download online
- Link to DOI frequently requested documents not activated
- Regional reading rooms needed links to bureau FOIA website/reading room
- Required documents were available via the Web, but not organized in a way that the public could locate them logically and easily
- Required documents were not posted on the bureau's electronic reading room site
- Bureaus did not link to DOI's electronic reading room when their frequently requested documents were maintained on the Departmental site
- Final opinions [and] orders made in the adjudication of cases not available inasmuch as all of these are issued by the Office of the Solicitor (SOL) and Office of Hearings and Appeals, which have been offline for six years (see note below)
- Bureau FOIA websites did not include a link to opinions and adjudications on the main DOI FOIA site
- Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and SOL currently do not have separate FOIA websites (see note below)

Bureaus/offices have corrected all of the deficiencies identified above with the exception of creating a FOIA website for SOL and BIA. With regard to BIA, all public information is available upon request by traditional methods (conventional reading room). BIA is currently developing new protocol and standards for Web development and expects to deploy one central electronic reading room by late spring 2009. Similarly SOL makes information available through conventional means and anticipates making it available via an electronic reading room by July 2009.

DOI satisfies subsection (a)(2) of the FOIA that mandates that Federal agencies must make four distinct categories of records affirmatively available for "public inspection and copying" by providing the designated documents in a combination of electronic and conventional Reading Rooms.

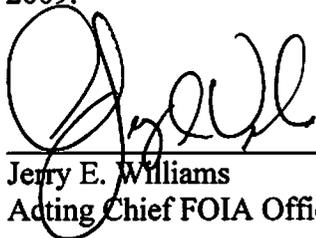
### Office of the Solicitor and the Bureau of Indian Affairs Reading Rooms

In 2002, the Department faced a significant litigation challenge in *Cobell v Norton*, which had a drastic impact on the FOIA program, whereby the Office of the Solicitor (SOL) and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) were completely disconnected from the Internet (including e-mail) for six years. BIA and SOL were reconnected to the Internet in the

third quarter of FY08. Now that they are reconnected, they plan on achieving compliance by July 2009.

Certification of DOI FOIA Reading Rooms

Based on the input provided by the bureaus/offices, I certify that DOI's reading rooms, are in partial compliance with the requirements of the FOIA, 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(2). The exceptions are BIA and SOL. These bureaus plan on achieving compliance by July 2009.



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Jerry E. Williams  
Acting Chief FOIA Officer

10/31/08

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Date

## **Attachment**

### **List of BLM State Reading Rooms:**

Wyoming State Office  
California State Office  
Idaho State Office  
Oregon State Office  
Nevada State Office  
Colorado State Office  
Alaska State Office  
National Fire Center  
Eastern States  
Arizona State Office  
Montana State Office  
National Training Center  
New Mexico State Office  
National Operations Center (links to Washington Office site)