



Office of the Chief
Records Officer for the
U.S. Government

Sent Via Email. No Hard Copy to Follow.

July 21, 2023

David Alspach
Department Records Officer
Department of the Interior
MS 7145A
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear David Alspach,

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) received an allegation of unauthorized disposition of agency records from the Department of Interior's (DOI) Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance (OEPC).

The allegation indicates that three OEPC employees willfully and knowingly discarded historical federal records after being advised that the records should be transferred to NARA. Some of the historical records related to legislation implementation dating back to the 1970s and other records to ongoing litigation pertaining to natural and manmade disasters, such as Deep Water Horizon and Gold King Mine.

NARA requests that the DOI investigate this allegation and provide the required report within 30 days of this letter. In accordance with 36 CFR 1230.14, the report should include a complete description of the records relevant to this allegation, including volume and dates of the records, applicable disposition authority numbers, and specific details describing the unauthorized disposition incident. Additionally, please include any salvage, recovery, or restoration efforts, and safeguards that will be implemented to prevent the future unauthorized disposition of agency records.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you wish to discuss further, please do not hesitate to contact me at Laurence.Brewer@nara.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Laurence N. Brewer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'L'.

LAURENCE BREWER
Chief Records Officer
for the U.S. Government

Enclosure



Office of the Chief
Records Officer for the
U.S. Government

Sent Via Email. No Hard Copy to Follow.

January 18, 2024

Christian Higgins
Office of the Secretary Records Officer
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
MS-7149K
Washington DC, 20240

Dear Christian Higgins,

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) received the Department of Interior's (DOI) report dated December 1, 2023, regarding the allegation of unauthorized disposition of the Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance (OEPC) records.

This report asserts that an investigation into the OEPC Denver Regional Office (RO) and its employees, as well as their interactions with OEPC Headquarters staff, found no basis for the allegation that any employee was directed to destroy OEPC records.

OEPC's investigation into this matter revealed that a group of notebooks and all office files that remained from the tenure of a former Regional Environmental Officer (REO) in the Denver RO were transferred to a new office and while setting up the new office space, all of the documentation was reviewed and appraised using the OEPC records schedule. Based on the current REO's review of the records schedule and the notebooks, it was concluded that the notebooks were reference copies and they were recycled.

The report also indicates that the OEPC Denver RO would not have likely held any responsive records for the Deep Water Horizon incident, and the litigation hold for this incident has been lifted. As to the Gold King Mine incident, although the former REO at the Denver RO was identified as a "departed" custodian for the Gold King Mine incident, it is unclear whether the former REO's notebooks, which were recycled, contained records related to the Gold King Mine incident.

Based on the information provided, OEPC has met all reporting requirements of 36 CFR 1230.14. NARA considers the allegation unfounded and this matter is now closed. If you have any questions, please contact me at laurence.brewer@nara.gov. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Laurence V. Brewer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a blue ink color.

LAURENCE BREWER
Chief Records Officer
for the U.S. Government

Cc: David Alspach, Department Records Officer