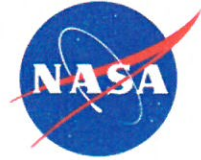


National Aeronautics and  
Space Administration  
**Jet Propulsion Laboratory**  
**NASA Management Office**  
FOIA Public Liaison Office  
4800 Oak Grove Dr., M/S 180-200K  
Pasadena, CA 91109-8001



Reply to Attn of: IA020/NMO

April 13, 2015

Dr. James E. Enstrom  
jenstrom@ucla.edu

**Re: FOIA Request 15-JPL-F-00590**

Dear Dr. Enstrom:

Thank you for your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request dated March 29, 2015 and received in our office on April 9, 2015. Your request was assigned Case File Number 15-JPL-F-00590.

Based on the information provided in your request, it appears you are not requesting any Agency Records; rather, you are asking questions of a California Institute of Technology (Caltech) employee at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL). In accordance with 14 CFR §1206.301(g) and Department of Justice Guidance, the Agency is not required to create or compile a record in response to a FOIA request. The act applies only to records in the possession and under the control of the Agency and in existence at the time the Agency begins its search for responsive documents. Furthermore, the FOIA does not require Agencies to answer questions posed as FOIA requests nor are the Agencies required to become investigators on behalf of requestors.

Additionally, because you have not described the records you are seeking, your request does not meet the requirements established under the FOIA and therefore is not a proper request. The FOIA is a record retrieval statute, and based on the information provided in your request, it is unclear what specific National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) record(s) you are requesting, and from what particular office. Requests should be limited in scope to allow FOIA staff to conduct a reasonable search for responsive records (14 CFR § 1206.301). In accordance with Department of Justice guidance, the FOIA was not intended to reduce government agencies to full-time investigators on behalf of requesters or to allow requesters to conduct "fishing expeditions" through agency files. A description of a requester records is sufficient if it enables a professional agency employee familiar with the subject area to locate the record with a "reasonable amount of effort." In additional, courts have held that agencies are not required to conduct wide-ranging, "unreasonably burdensome" searches for records.

In accordance with the NASA FOIA regulations (14 CFR § 1206.301), a requester is required to describe the record sought so that a knowledgeable official can locate the record with a reasonable amount of effort. Descriptive information about a record may be divided into two

broad categories:

(i) Category I is file-related and includes information such as type of record, title, index citation, subject area, date the record was created, or its originator.

(ii) Category II is event-related and includes the circumstances that resulted in the record being created or the date and circumstances surrounding the event the record covers.

Generally, a record is not reasonably described unless the description contains sufficient Category I information to permit the conduct of an organized, non-random search based on the existing filing arrangements and retrieval systems, or unless the record contains sufficient Category II information to permit inference of the Category I elements needed to conduct such a search. The information contained in your request could potentially involve a variety of NASA program offices and initiatives across the entire Agency. NASA is not equipped to conduct a text search for the terms you have provided throughout all files in the agency, even if you provide a defined timeframe that will produce a list of responsive records. Without more specific information regarding specific documents you are requesting or the originator of those documents, along with a specific timeframe you would like us to search that will narrow this overly broad request, we are unable to process your request.

This is to advise you that we are administratively closing your request in that it is not a proper FOIA request as indicated above.

In the future, if you wish to request Agency records and you are able to describe them as indicated above, we will place your request in the 'other' category, which entitles the requester to two hours of search and 100 pages of copy, and process your request up to \$50.00 or an amount that you have stated you are willing to pay. However, before we can process your request, you will need to provide clarification regarding the scope of your request as indicated above.

Before submitting a FOIA request in the future, please review the NASA FOIA regulations located at this site:

<http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?c=ecfr&sid=97fb51c6e62b667333b7f1645d203f11&rgn=div5&view=text&node=14:5.0.1.1.8&idno=14>

You may make a FOIA request by following the instructions contained at this site:

<http://www.nasa.gov/sites/default/files/files/How-to-make-a-request-for-Agency-records-July-2-2014.pdf>

And, by completing the on-line request form here:

<http://socialforms.nasa.gov/foia>

If you are inquiring about an employee at JPL or have questions regarding Human Resource issues, you may wish to call JPL Employee Records at 818-354-2965.

Questions regarding this action should be in writing to this center at the address shown on the letterhead. You may also e-mail correspondence to [jpl-foia@nasa.gov](mailto:jpl-foia@nasa.gov) or reach me by telephone at 818-393-6779 and fax at 818-393-3160. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Dennis B. Mahon  
Freedom of Information Act  
Public Liaison Officer