

**FOIA & EXPEDITED PROCESSING REQUEST
CLARIFICATION/APPEAL
USAID programs in Bolivia during 2008 RE: F-00322-08**

Ms. Kathleen Hearne
FOIA Specialist
Office of Administrative Services
U.S. Agency for International Development
Room 4.6B, Ronald Reagan Building (RRB)
Washington, DC 20523-4601

Sunday, September 28, 2008

Dear Ms. Hearne,

By means of this letter, I am appealing your determination not to initiate the processing of my Sunday, September 14, 2008 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request regarding:

“any and all records that USAID may possess regarding USAID programs in Bolivia during 2008.”

You cite an “ongoing political crisis” in Bolivia and the reduction and personnel in the embassy there as the reason you are not going to initiate the search in La Paz. While I think that USAID over-reacted in Bolivia by withdrawing its personnel from its embassy there, your position seems reasonable to me - but only with regards to that part of the search to be conducted in Bolivia.

Clearly, there is no such “crisis” here in the Washington, DC area. In yours of September 19th you neglected to address the fact that there are undoubtedly hundreds of documents on this subject held within USAID offices here in Washington, DC and in the offices of USAID’s pass-through entities such as Casals & Associates, Inc., among others. There is no reason why the search of such material cannot be conducted here – and expedited.

I asked for the “expedited processing” of the FOIA request precisely because it is an important news story now. After the “crisis” ends it will no longer be an important news story. Given the extreme tardiness of USAID FOIA “unexpedited” responses – this means that I could have to wait several years to receive a definitive response – especially in the case that a search were to be initiated in the future.

So, please immediately initiate a search and review of all of the material available to USAID here in the Washington, DC area. The search of the La Paz embassy’s documents can take place immediately after normalization of relations.

Thank you for your rapid response and for your time and consideration.

Respectfully yours,

Jeremy Bigwood