

# N . I . C . A . R

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR COMPUTER-ASSISTED REPORTING  
A joint program of Investigative Reporters and Editors, Inc. and The Missouri School of  
Journalism

138 Neff Annex, Columbia Missouri 65211  
Phone: (573) 884-7711 fax: (573) 882-5431  
Brant Houston, Executive Director

Lauren Price  
FOIA Coordinator  
Federal Railroad Administration  
1120 Vermont Avenue NW Stop 10  
Washington, D.C. 20590

December 8, 2004

Dear Ms. Price:

This is our request, under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act, for electronic copies of your agency's Inspection database. As listed on FRA's Office of Safety Analysis webpage, we request all fields of information, including but not limiting to, defects of Codes of Federal Regulations and CFR Parts for all railroads and companies in the U.S, and federal and state inspectors, for all years available, which should at least include 1995-2004.

We request that this data be provided in ASCII electronic or dbf format, either via CD or download, including all fields of information. We also request documentation, either electronic or paper in format, of record layouts, code definitions and coding manuals.

We ask for any applicable fees waived because through this request, we are gathering information concerning railroad safety. Release of the information is in the public interest because it will contribute significantly to public understanding of government operations and activities. The public has an urgent need for such information, and your agency's databases are prime resources of such information. If for some reason expenses might be incurred, please notify us prior to this.

In addition, this information is being sought for dissemination to the general public by Investigative Reporters and Editors Inc., a nonprofit journalism organization, and the National Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting, a venture of the nonprofit organization in coordination with the University of Missouri Journalism School.

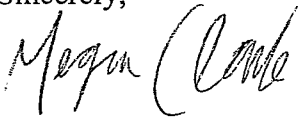
If this request is denied in whole or part, we ask that you justify all deletions by reference to specific exemptions of the Freedom of Information Act. We will also expect you to release all segregable portions of otherwise exempt material. Of course, we reserve the right to appeal your decision to withhold any information or to deny a waiver of fees.

FEDERAL RAILROAD  
ADMINISTRATION  
2004 DEC 16 PM 4: 30  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF COUNSEL

As we are making this request as a journalism organization and this information is of timely value, we would appreciate your communicating by telephone (573-884-7711) or e-mail [megan@nicar.org](mailto:megan@nicar.org), rather than by regular mail, if you have questions regarding this request. We request that you provide expedited review of this request.

We look forward to your reply within 20 business days, as the statute requires. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Megan Clarke". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Megan Clarke  
Data Analyst