



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

***Sent Via Email. No Hard Copy to Follow.***

January 17, 2024

Beatriz Collazo  
Department Records Officer  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave., SW  
Washington DC 20250-1150

Dear Beatriz Collazo,

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) received the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) report dated January 11, 2024, regarding the potential loss of hardcopy records maintained by the Office of Hearings and Appeals (OHA).

This report indicates that in September 2023, the clerk of the Office of the Administrative Law Judges (OALJ) initiated a search for a consent decision associated with a 1996 case file. Records management (RM) program documentation revealed that the 1996 case file was transferred to the Washington National Records Center in Suitland, Maryland, under Transfer Number W-016-03-9208. The RM team researched the Archives and Records Centers Information System (ARCIS), located five boxes under that transfer number, and requested all five boxes from the FRC.

Upon receipt, the OALJ's staff searched the contents of each box and could not locate the file in question. The missing case file is covered by Disposition Authority NC1-016-80-1-1E, has a temporary retention period of 25 years, and may not have been appropriately transferred to the records center under Transfer Number W-016-03-9208.

NARA acknowledges that USDA cannot locate and confirm how the case file was lost, the information in the case file cannot be reconstructed, and the OHA has instituted new controls to prevent future loss of records.

Based on the information provided, the reporting requirements of 36 CFR 1230.14(a) have been met and NARA considers this matter closed. I appreciate your attention on this important

matter. If you have any questions or wish to discuss further, please contact me at [laurence.brewer@nara.gov](mailto:laurence.brewer@nara.gov).

Sincerely,

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

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