

CHAPTER 3 - CONGRESSIONAL CORRESPONDENCE

- 3-1. **CONGRESSIONAL CORRESPONDENCE GUIDELINES.** This chapter provides guidelines on preparing correspondence to Members of Congress. See Chapter 2 for specific guidance on preparing correspondence based upon the signature level.
- 3-2. **STYLE.** Replies to congressional correspondence will be written in a clear, direct style, and will fully respond to the incoming correspondence.
- a. Suggested opening and closing paragraphs:

Constituent Referral for Director's signature (See Figure 3-1)

Thank you for your letter of (date) on behalf of [name(s) of constituent(s)] regarding/concerning/supporting/opposing/requesting _____.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to be of service. Please let us know if we can provide any further assistance.

Constituent Referral for Regional Director's signature

Director (name) has asked me to respond to your letter of (date) on behalf of [name(s) of constituent(s)] regarding/concerning/supporting/opposing/requesting _____.

Please let me know if I can be of further assistance.

Issue Mail for Director's signature (See Figure 3-2)

Thank you for your letter of (date) concerning [supporting/opposing/requesting] _____.

Again, thank you for your interest in (this/these) important issue(s). Please contact the me or (Assistant/Regional Director [name]) at [phone no.] if you have further (questions/concerns).

Secretarial correspondence (See Figures 3-3 and 3-5)

See Chapter 2, Procedures for Preparing Letters, for opening and closing sentences, format, preparing an interim (see Figure 3-4), and surname requirements.

- b. See Appendix B for models of address to be used for correspondence to Members of Congress. Attention will be given to the salutation or signature on the incoming letter, the status of the Member who is being addressed, and the capacity in which the Member has requested a response from the Department of the Interior.

1. When a Member is writing in his/her capacity as chairman of a committee or subcommittee, the response will be addressed to the Member as chairman to his/her committee or subcommittee address.

A courtesy copy MUST be sent to the Ranking Minority Member.

EXCEPTION: Copies of correspondence regarding a hearing, a witness, or testimony WILL NOT be sent to the Ranking Minority Member.

2. The salutation that will be used is Dear Mr. Chairman or Madam Chairwoman:
3. When a Member is writing on behalf of a constituent, the response will be addressed to him/her as a Member of the House or Senate.

NOTE: If the Member of Congress requests the response be sent directly to the constituent, a copy should be prepared for the Member. This should be reflected as:

cc: Honorable (first and last name)

- c. When an incoming is signed by several Members, an original, individually addressed response will be prepared for each Member. Do not make “file copies” for each addressee. Instead, make one set of file copies and indicate on copies to whom identical letters were sent.

Example:

Identical letters sent to:

Honorable Chuck Hagel
Honorable Ben Nelson
Honorable Doug Bereuter

Indicate in the first paragraph that an identical letter is being sent to each signatory.

- d. For correspondence to be signed by the Director or Assistant Secretary, a formal salutation will ALWAYS be used.
- e. Attention lines will be indicated on envelopes **ONLY**.
- f. For responses forwarded to Members of Congress at their Washington, D.C., address, no building names or room numbers will be used in the inside address or on the envelope. The address is ALWAYS three lines only! (See Figure 3-2)
- g. If correspondence is addressed to a Member’s district office, a notation on the original will indicate that a copy has been provided to his/her Washington Office:

Copy to your Washington, D.C., office

3-3. **COPY REQUIREMENTS.**

- a. Copy requirements for congressional letters are the same as for other letters based upon signature level. If the Service is requesting committee or subcommittee approval of a proposed action (e.g., land exchange, hatchery transfer, or other activity for which a procedure of request or notification has been established by a committee), the originating office will maintain a photocopy of the signed letter transmitted to each committee or subcommittee. Stamped copies or a copy indicating that a “similar” or “identical” letter was sent to another committee/subcommittee will not be sufficient to establish a record of transmittal.
- b. When transmitting reports to a chairman of a committee or subcommittee, a letter and copy of the report will also be sent to the Ranking Minority Member. Courtesy copies (cc:) are not acceptable for this type of action (See Figure 3-5).

3-4. **SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS/HANDLING.** Check the incoming for any special instructions. Also, check the ETP or ExecSec control sheets for special instructions or handling. If the originating office has special instructions for processing, these instructions must be in clear view. Use a note to reviewers or tape special instructions to the clear plastic cover to convey the instructions; e.g., Return original(s) for mailing; Enclosure(s) to be added after the letter(s) is/are signed; Do not mail--letters must be handcarried to the Hill; Chairman/Senator/Congressman has requested information by COB on Friday; etc.

When special handling is required, a point of contact and a phone number should be provided. In case that individual is on travel or leave, a backup person and phone number should be listed. This information will eliminate unnecessary delays and will expedite the delivery of document(s) to the proper individual(s).



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Washington, D.C. 20240



In Reply Refer To:
FWS/AFHC-MA/002134

Honorable Bob Graham
United States Senator
2252 Killearn Center Boulevard, Suite 300
Tallahassee, Florida 32309

Dear Senator Graham:

Secretary Norton has asked the Fish and Wildlife Service to respond to your letter of January 3 on behalf of Mrs. Virginia E. Smith concerning the inclusion of her property in the Coastal Barrier Resources System.

A careful examination was made of her property in relation to the P 32, Moreno Point Unit of the System. It was determined that the boundary had been drawn at the break between developed and undeveloped land, as was the intent of the Coastal Barrier Resources Act of 1982. It was never the intent of the Act to draw boundaries along property lines. Therefore, the boundary is fully in compliance with the requirements of the Act. No changes regarding her property resulted from the Coastal Barrier Improvement Act of 1990.

The Service regrets Mrs. Smith was unaware of her property being placed in the System. Every effort was made to notify State and local governments of the location of the units in the System. The Destin Log, a local newspaper, published several articles about this particular area. Although certainly desirable, it was not feasible to locate and notify all the thousands of landowners affected by the Act from Maine to Texas.

The opportunity to look into this matter is appreciated. Please let us know if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

DIRECTOR

Copy to your Washington Office

FIGURE 3-1. LETTER TO DISTRICT OFFICE--CONSTITUENT MAIL



United States Department of the Interior
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Washington, D.C. 20240



In Reply Refer To:
FWS/AES/DCN004321

Honorable Larry E. Craig
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Honorable Jo Ann Emerson
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Ms. Emerson:

Dear Senator Craig:

Thank you for your letter of September 21, 2002, expressing concern about the ongoing review of Federal authority and policies regarding the conditioning of road access permits in a manner that may affect logging activities on private property accessed by crossing U.S. Forest Service land.

In response to a request for policy review by agency regional executives in the Pacific Northwest, the Washington office staffs of the Forest Service, the National Marine Fisheries Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are now reviewing agency authorities and responsibilities under the Alaska National Interests Lands Conservation Act, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, and the Endangered Species Act to protect public resources, including threatened and endangered species, while ensuring the rights of private property owners to use and enjoyment of their lands.

At the national level the agencies have attempted to identify the geographic areas where this issue may be of concern and are now examining the policies of Federal agencies in view of legal authorities. The next step is to determine whether policies need to be clarified and, if so, to provide clarification through guidance developed by the multi-agency group. We expect the process to take several months. If new guidance is required, the Service and the other agencies will notify interested Members of Congress and comply with all applicable requirements for public notice and comment.

Please be assured that the Service is not seeking to deny private landowners adequate access to and use of their land, but rather to ensure that we and the other Federal agencies are complying with applicable Federal laws.

Again, thank you for your interest. Please contact us if you have further questions.

Sincerely,

DIRECTOR

FIGURE 3-2. RESPONSE TO MEMBER OF CONGRESS--ISSUE MAIL



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

Honorable Jerry Lewis
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Lewis:

Thank you for your letter of July 26, 2001, expressing your interest in the process to designate critical habitat for the San Bernardino kangaroo rat.

Due to deadlines established by a settlement agreement (SWCG et al. v. Babbitt et al.), the Fish and Wildlife Service was unable to complete a draft economic analysis to accompany the proposed critical habitat designation. The draft economic analysis is in the final clearance process and will be published and made available for comment in the near future. I agree a meeting is appropriate; representatives of the Service and my staff are scheduled to meet with you on Wednesday, October 3, 2001, to discuss the proposed designation.

Thank you for informing me of your concerns about the kangaroo rat critical habitat designation. As Secretary, my goal is to achieve collaboration, consultation, and communication with all involved entities. We will work closely with Congress and the American public to ensure fair and effective administration of the Endangered Species Act.

I look forward to working with you to accomplish these goals.

Sincerely,

Gale A. Norton

FIGURE 3-3. LETTER PREPARED FOR SECRETARY'S SIGNATURE



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, D.C. 20240

Honorable James V. Hansen
Chairman, Committee on Resources
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510-3701

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Thank you for your October 17 letter to Secretary Norton regarding the proposed revisions to the Federal Manual for Identifying and Delineating Jurisdictional Wetlands.

We had hoped 2 weeks would be sufficient to provide for the necessary coordination among the National Park Service, the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Reclamation, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Bureau of Land Management in order to respond to your questions. However, we have not been able to meet this time frame. Due to the number of bureaus involved, requirement for regional input and Departmental processing, we now anticipate being able to respond to your request by December 16.

Thank you for your continuing interest in the Department of the Interior. If we can be of further assistance, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

David Bernhardt
Director of Congressional and
Legislative Affairs, and
Counselor to the Secretary

FIGURE 3-4. CONGRESSIONAL INTERIM LETTER



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

Honorable Michael D. Crapo
Ranking Minority Member
Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Crapo:

Pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 100-478, I am pleased to enclose the annual report compiled by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on reasonably identifiable expenditures for the conservation of endangered and threatened species by Federal and State agencies.

Sincerely,

Gale A. Norton

Enclosure

Honorable Nick J. Rahall II
Ranking Minority Member
Committee on Resources
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Rahall:

**FIGURE 3-5. LETTERS TO RANKING MINORITY MEMBERS/
HOUSE AND SENATE**

**ADDRESSES FOR CORRESPONDENCE TO THE INTERIOR APPROPRIATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEES:**

The House of Representatives' address is:

Honorable Joe Skeen
Chairman, Subcommittee on Interior
Committee on Appropriations
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

A courtesy copy of Chairman Skeen's letter should always be sent and noted to the Ranking
Minority Member:

cc: Honorable Norman Dicks
Ranking Minority Member

The Senate's address is:

Honorable Robert C. Byrd
Chairman, Subcommittee on Interior
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

A courtesy copy of Chairman Byrd's letter should always be sent and noted to the Ranking
Minority Member:

cc: Honorable Conrad Burns
Ranking Minority Member

**FIGURE 3-6. ADDRESSES FOR APPROPRIATION COMMITTEES
AND COPIES TO THE RANKING MINORITY MEMBERS**