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May 11, 2026

VIA E-MAIL ONLY: levi@valorinvestigates.com

Levi Bakke
501 C Avenue
La Grande, OR 97850

Re: Petition for Public Records Disclosure Order
Department of Human Services
DOJ File No.: 100301-GA0092-26

Dear Mr. Bakke:

This letter is the Attorney General's response to your petition under the Oregon Public Records Law, ORS 192.311 to 192.431. Your petition, dated May 4, 2026, seeks assistance from the Attorney General in obtaining records you requested from the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) on April 10, 2026. For the reasons that follow, we respectfully deny your petition.

The Public Records Law confers the right to inspect public records in Oregon, unless such records are exempt under ORS 192.338, 192.345, or 192.355. ORS 192.314(1). Upon receipt of a written public records request by an individual identified in an agency's published procedures for submitting requests, the agency is obligated to respond to the request "as soon as practicable and without unreasonable delay." ORS 192.329(1). An agency that is unable to complete its response within fifteen business days of receiving a written request is required to provide the requester with a reasonable estimated completion date. ORS 192.329(5). A requester may petition the Attorney General if they believe an agency has failed to comply with the processing timelines contained in ORS 192.329. ORS 192.407(1). The agency carries the burden of sustaining its actions. ORS 192.411(1).

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We reviewed the correspondence between you and ODHS regarding your records request. ODHS received your request on April 10, 2026. On April 17, 2026, ODHS acknowledged the request and explained that the agency was experiencing a significant backlog that would lengthen processing times. ODHS sent a follow-up email on May 1, 2026, extending its estimated completion date to May 22, 2026. On May 6, 2026, ODHS sent another clarification, stating that based on its current backlog, it expected to complete its response by June 15, 2026.

The ODHS Public Records Unit works records requests in order of receipt. ODHS indicates that the total number of active requests in the queue is 2,928 with a backlog of 2,523. Because of this request volume, ODHS was unable to complete its response to your request by its initial response date. By sending its May 6, 2026, letter to you, ODHS complied with its obligation to provide you with a written statement of its new estimated completion date. ORS 192.329(5)(b). ODHS has not actually denied your request, and the delays appear to be due to the significant volume of record requests ODHS is currently processing. Under these circumstances, we cannot conclude that ODHS has unreasonably delayed processing your request. We therefore respectfully deny your petition.

Sincerely,

BENJAMIN GUTMAN
Deputy Attorney General

DEP:pjn
c via e-mail only: Mallory Kenney (ODHS)