Office of Information Affairs

September 1, 2026

Delivered via ELECTRONIC MAIL
Elizabeth Haddix
American Oversight
1030 15th Street NW, Suite B255
Washington, DC 20005
Email: foia@americanoversight.org

Re: Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request No. 2026-OSEC-03108-F
Final Response

Dear Elizabeth Haddix:

This is the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Office of Information Affairs' (OIA), final response to the above referenced FOIA request seeking text messages and other instant messages between Secretary Rollins, Deputy Secretary Vaden, Kailee Buller, Preston Parry, Jennifer Tiller, Anthony Shea, Kelsey Barnes, Christopher Esparza, Christine Dawe, Brian Klippenstein, or Todd Lindsey that:

1. Contain any of the following keywords: "Arkansas," Arkansan," "Cotton," "Boozman," "Rick Crawford," "French Hill," "Womack," "Westerman," "Huckabee," "Sanders," or "Wes Ward; or

2. With any of the following external individuals: Joe Mencer, Jeff Rutledge, Pace Hindsley, Andrew Grobmyer, Rich Hillman, Warren Carter, Sarah Huckabee Sanders, Gretchen Conger, Judd Deere, Jamie Barker, Hugh McDonald, Allison Hatfield, Client O'Neal, Jennifer Emerson, Wes Ward, Cynthia Edwards, Alex Johnston, A.J. Gary, Jodi Lee, Scott Bass, Tom Cotton, John Boozman, Rick Crawford, French Hill, Steve Womack, or Bruce Westerman.

Your request has been processed under the FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552.

A search for responsive communications was conducted by the Office of the Secretary's (OSEC) telecommunications provider, the Client Experience Center (CEC). The CEC provides comprehensive, fee-for-service information technology (IT) associated operations, security, and technical support services to USDA end-users. The CEC also implements and manages enterprise IT solutions for users Department-wide. The search did not locate any responsive records.

Additionally, manual searches were conducted by OSEC. Manual searches are conducted to ensure that records not captured by our office's IT service provider, if any, are also included in the OIA's response to a requester. OSEC's search located four (4) pages of records responsive to your request.

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The OIA considered the foreseeable harm standard when reviewing the records and applying any relevant FOIA exemptions and has determined that certain information contained therein should be withheld pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552 (b)(4) and (b)(6) (FOIA Exemptions 4 and 6). Below is an explanation of the information that has been withheld.

FOIA Exemption 4

Exemption 4 of the FOIA protects "trade secrets and commercial or financial information obtained from a person [that is] privileged or confidential." 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(4). The exemption covers two distinct categories of information in federal agency records, (1) trade secrets, and (2) information that is (a) commercial or financial, and (b) obtained from a person, and (c) privileged or confidential. In this instance, the OIA is withholding information related to private loan amounts. The information was submitted to USDA by an outside party. We have determined that these records contain financial information that is customarily treated as private by the business submitter. Therefore, the information is considered confidential.

FOIA Exemption 6

Exemption 6 is generally referred to as the "personal privacy" exemption. It provides that the disclosure requirements of the FOIA do not apply to "personnel and medical files and similar files the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy." Application of the exemption involves balancing the public's interest in disclosure against individuals' privacy interests.

The information withheld under Exemption 6 consists of a private individual's identity. This information qualifies as "similar files" because it is information in which individuals have a privacy interest. Releasing individuals' identity could subject the individuals to unwarranted or unsolicited communications, or even harassment. Furthermore, the release of this information would not shed additional light on the government's operations. Because there is a viable privacy interest that would be threatened by disclosure, Exemption 6 authorizes this office to withhold the information. Accordingly, we have determined that the public interest in the information's release does not outweigh the overriding privacy interests in keeping it confidential.

You may appeal this response by email at USDAFOIA@usda.gov. Your appeal must be in writing, and it must be received electronically no later than 90 calendar days from the date of this letter. The OIA will not consider appeals received after the 90 calendar-day limit. Appeals received after 5:00 p.m. EST will be considered received the next business day. The appeal letter should include the FOIA tracking number, a copy of the original request, the OIA's response to your original request, and a statement explaining the basis of your appeal. For quickest possible handling, the subject line of your email and the appeal letter should be marked "Freedom of Information Act Appeal" and reference FOIA No. 2026-OSEC-03108-F.

You may seek dispute resolution services from the OIA's FOIA Public Liaison, Ms. Melanie Enciso. Ms. Enciso may be contacted by telephone at 202-720-9462, or electronically at Melanie.Enciso@usda.gov or USDAFOIA@usda.gov.

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You also have the option to seek assistance from the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS). Please visit Request OGIS Assistance | National Archives for information about how to request OGIS assistance in relation to a FOIA request.

Provisions of the FOIA allow us to recover part of the cost of processing your request. In this instance, no fees will be charged.

If you have any questions regarding the processing of this request, please contact Mr. Kyle Kemper at (202) 378-1074 or electronically at Kyle.Kemper@usda.gov or USDAFOIA@usda.gov.

For additional information regarding USDA FOIA regulations and processes, please refer to the information available online at Freedom of Information Act Division | USDA.
The OIA appreciates the opportunity to assist you with this matter.

Sincerely,

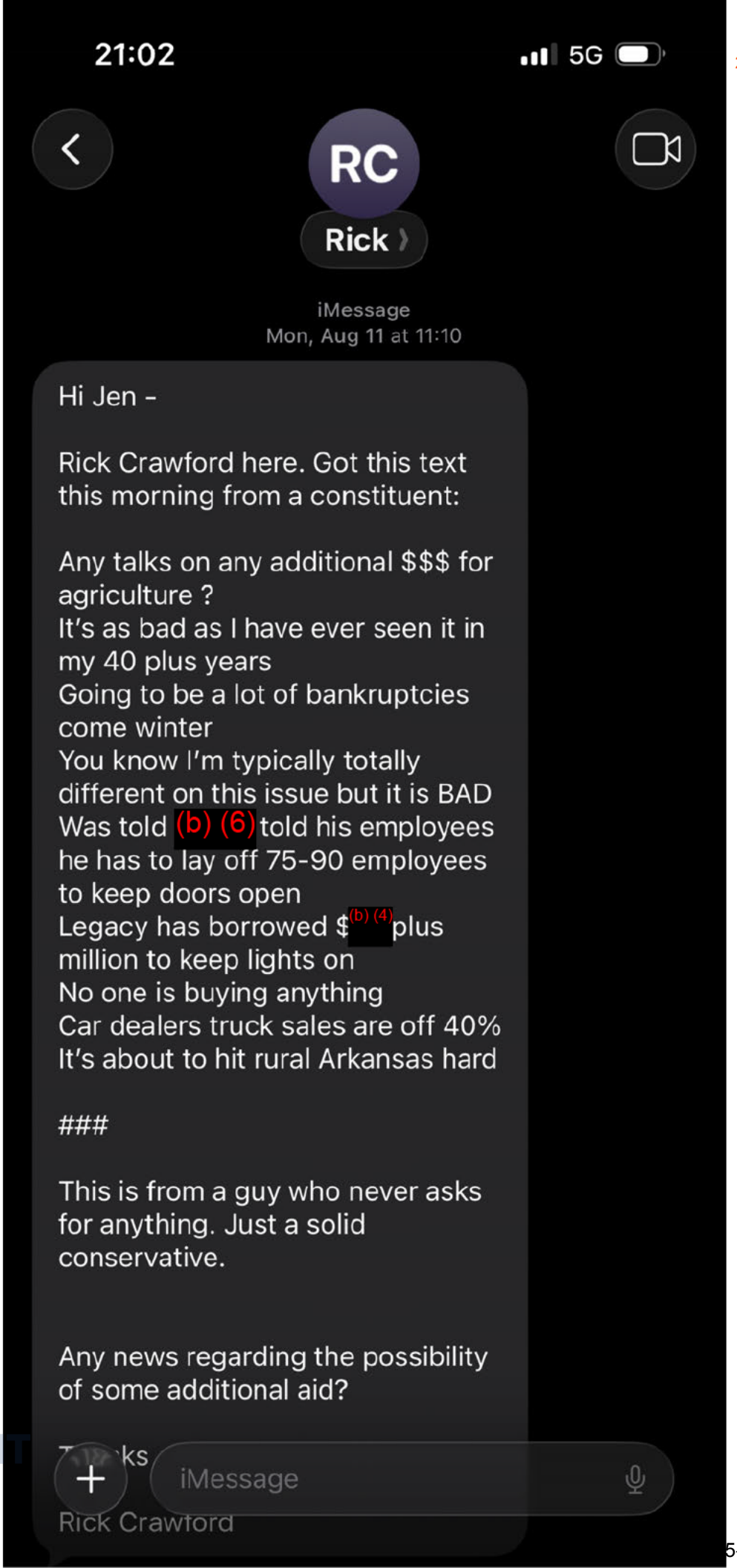
Alexis R. Graves

Alexis R. Graves
Director
Office of Information Affairs

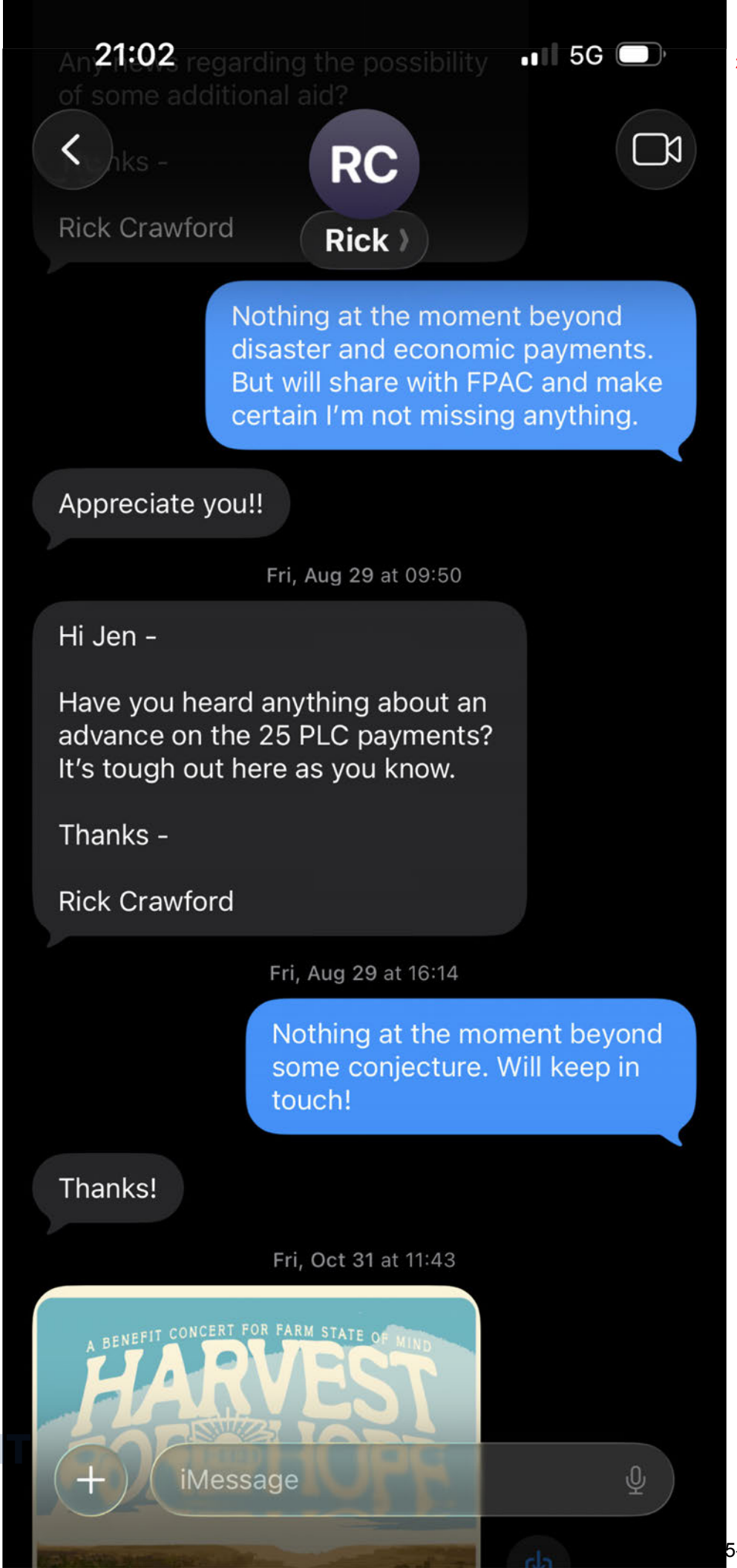
Enclosure: Responsive Records (4 pages)

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2026-OSEC-03108-F



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Rollins's presence would help secure their commitment. Any help you could provide would be most appreciated.

Thanks so much -

Rick

21:02 5G

RC

Rick

I will pass this on! Amazing opportunity.

Awesome - thanks!

The little town of Keo, Arkansas is just outside Little Rock. For planning purposes.

Remind me who your scheduler is?

Courtney Handey



iMessage

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21:03 5G

Courtney Handey



Update flyer. Time was changed.

Looks like she's traveling so unavailable. I'm sorry. Any interest in the Deputy Secretary?

Sure

Standby.

And he's traveling as well. If you want me to check with any of the Under Secretaries, let me know.

Delivered

Will do. Appreciate your effort. Thanks!!

iMessage

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