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Subject: Congressional Update For Today
I would like to provide you with an update on some developments today.(1.) As Tracy indicated in an earlier, e-mail, Lynn Garner, identifying herself as a legislative assistant from Congressman's Ishtook's office (202) 225-2132, called the ARRB office today and wanted to know if we had "submitted a 1998 budget." Tracy told her that someone would get back to her. I wanted to talk to Michelle Mrdeza first (which I did, see below) to let her know of our need of another year and at the end of the day left a voice mail message for Garner. (2.) I called Michelle Mzdeza of the House Appropriation Treasury and Postal Subcommittee (202) 225-5834 this morning. Although Mrdeza was hearing about our need for an extension for the first time and she acknowledged that this was obviously not a call she wanted to receive, she cautiously said, "my feeling is that I can't see this as a big issue, given what you have done so far, might as well do it right and finish the job." But, she made clear that we have work to do.A little more detail:a. I started out with some pleasantries and then got right to the issue and tried to make our case up front (didn't expect to be asking for another year, a lot accomplished to date, specific accomplishments for an extra year, problems we encountered during the last ten months or so.) I mentioned the agency compliance program and pointed out that this documentation, as well as the extra time to process the remaining records, would make for a more complete final report. This seemed to strike a cord, as she made reference to a more complete final report later in the conversation. b. Mrdeza was most gracious, courteous, candid and readily offering guidance, despite the fact that I was delivering news that she did not expect and did not want to hear.c. She said it would be a lot easier for the extension to happen if we were in the President's budget and noted that the President could submit an amendment to his budget. I told her that Jack was reaching out to the White House.d. Michelle raised (very early in the conversation) the possibility of putting the necessary authorizing language in the appropriation bill and that we "may not need a separate authorization bill." She raised the question of whether our authorizing committee (Burton) would object to another year. Basically, Michelle was saying that we need Burton's support. (Although very confidentially she said that we might be able to overcome a lack of support from Burton and still get the extension language into an appropriation bill. However, I think that we must try to get Burton's support). e. I mentioned the Stokes to Hoyer letter. Basically, she said not to invest too much time in Hoyer because the extension will happen if Kolby wants it to happen, with or without Hoyer. f. Mrdeza said that we should plan on Jack making a courtesy call on Chairman Kolby in the near future.g. Although Michelle did not know what Ishtook's staff person was up to in calling us, we can expect opposition from him. That does not mean that the Chair won't support us because of Ishtook's opposition, but we need to know that he will

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