



Public Works Projects for the Internet

April 15, 2008

Mr. Timothy P. Bowling
Chief Quality Officer
Government Accountability Office
Washington, DC 20548

Ref. PRI-08-097

Dear Mr. Bowling:

I would like to thank you again for your very prompt responsive answer to my previous request for records pertaining to the federal legislative histories contract with Thomson West Publishing Corporation. I have one final request for records on this topic.

I would like to first thank you for clearing up the misunderstandings about the way your contract with Thomson West works. I missed the part where Thomson gives you accounts to access your own records as that part was redacted by you in the contract that was released. I now understand that there are three categories of records:

1. The 1.2 million pages that GAO scanned by the government and available on the GAO internet.
2. The DVDs of "GAO Materials" which Thomson West furnishes to you.
3. The other materials which form the bulk of the federal legislative histories and which Thomson West scans and then returns the paper to you, with the electronic versions being only available on the Thomson West system.

You have responded to categories 2 and 3 in my previous records request. We disagree with the assertion that traveling to Washington, D.C. to pay \$0.20/page meets the public access goals of broader dissemination of this important information. The GAO legislative histories are widely considered the most authoritative and complete and can thus hardly be considered to materials compiled solely for the convenience of GAO staff. Indeed, the Thomson West publicity page makes clear that these materials "would have been impossible to find in the past" and that "Legislative documents are often rare, scattered and difficult or impossible to locate."

At this time, I am requesting copies of the electronic records in category 1. In the contract you disclosed in your response PRI-08-081, I would refer you to Section J ("List of Documents, Exhibits and Other Attachments"), Attachment A ("Statement of Work"). In the "Background" section, there is a reference to 1,214,438 pages over 243 histories obtained by GAO as part of a pilot project, which are the subject of this records request.

For the purpose of evaluating this request, I would like to state that we would be happy to send in a disk drive or to FTP this data from over the Internet and that our purpose in requesting these records is to broadly disseminate the information to the public, including making copies in numerous nonprofit systems run by major libraries throughout the country and by nonprofit institutions such as the 501(c)(3) Internet Archive.

For the purpose of evaluating my request, you should know that Public.Resource.Org is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation engaged primarily in the business of disseminating government information to the public at no cost to the public. We are requesting that you waive all fees because disclosure of these records is in the public interest and will contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government. If you do not waive charges and the costs are more than \$10,000, please contact me.

Sincerely yours,

Carl Malamud
President & CEO
Public.Resource.Org, Inc.