



STATE OF MARYLAND
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

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TELECOPIER NO.

WRITER'S DIRECT DIAL NO.

May 7, 1996

Deborah Byrd
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Cambridge, Maryland 21613

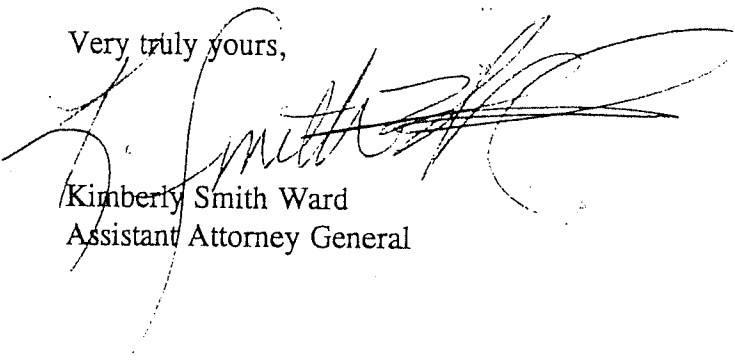
Dear Ms. Byrd:

I am writing in response to our conversation of Tuesday, May 7 in which you asked whether the Maryland Public Information Act ("PIA") requires that an individual make a specific request as to the information being sought or is it sufficient for the individual to state that he or she wishes to see the "agency's records." An individual has to make a specific request for information before he or she is granted access.

The PIA envisions a written request. State Government Article § 10-614 (a person or governmental unit that wishes to inspect a public record shall submit a *written* application to the custodian). While there is no requirement that an applicant give a reason for the request, *Moberly v. Herboldsheimer*, 276 Md. 211, 227, 345 A.2d 855 (1975), the request itself must be sufficiently stated so as to notify the agency of the records the applicant wishes to inspect. *Public Information Act Manual*, Office of the Attorney General (6th ed. 1993).

I hope that this letter of advice, although not an opinion of the Attorney General, is fully responsive to your inquiry. Please let me know if I may be of further assistance.

Very truly yours,



Kimberly Smith Ward
Assistant Attorney General