



# United States Department of the Interior

## OFFICE OF HEARINGS AND APPEALS

Office of the Director

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### **Standing Order on Electronic Transmission<sup>1</sup>**

The General Rules governing the Office of Hearings and Appeals (OHA)<sup>2</sup> recognize that the OHA Director “may issue Standing Orders to convey current information to parties and the public. This includes . . . the OHA Standing Orders on Electronic Transmission to convey information related to electronic transmission, including filing and service.”<sup>3</sup>

This Standing Order provides the option for electronic transmission of documents in proceedings and appeals before OHA’s Departmental Cases Hearings Division, Director’s Office, Interior Board of Indian Appeals, and Interior Board of Land Appeals. Under the previous Standing Order on Electronic Transmission signed April 3, 2023, some OHA units permitted filing of documents by email while OHA developed a new electronic filing and docket management system. That system is called Bison File & Serve (BFS), and it is now available for electronic filing, subject to Unit-specific requirements set forth in this Standing Order.

The Department has directed all Departmental bureaus and offices that appear before OHA’s Departmental Cases Hearings Division, Director’s Office, Interior Board of Indian Appeals, and Interior Board of Land Appeals to use BFS. OHA will grant Departmental bureaus and offices a 30-day grace period (until April 4, 2025) to comply with this requirement. For all other individuals and entities who appear before these OHA units, identified in this Order as eFilers, this Standing Order authorizes—but does not require—the use of BFS in addition to other methods of filing and serving documents authorized in 43 C.F.R. part 4 or other applicable law.

#### **What is BFS?**

BFS enables users to electronically file (eFile) documents with OHA and to electronically serve documents on other users, including Departmental bureaus and offices. For example, when regulations require a new case to be filed with OHA, external users will be able to file through BFS and select the Departmental bureaus and offices that they are required to serve. The system will send to the selected bureaus and offices an email notification that the case has been filed, along with a copy of the case-initiating documents being served. When regulations require a new case to be filed with a bureau or office, that bureau or office must transmit the case to OHA through BFS. After a case is initiated with OHA, the initiating party, all bureaus and offices that

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<sup>1</sup> This Standing Order supersedes all prior Standing Orders on Electronic Transmission issued by the OHA Director or individual OHA units and does not apply to proceedings under the White Earth Reservation Land Settlement Act (WELSA). For provisions applicable to WELSA proceedings, please see OHA’s Standing Order on WELSA Proceedings.

<sup>2</sup> 43 C.F.R. part 4, subpart A.

<sup>3</sup> 43 C.F.R. § 4.5(b).

are interested parties to the case, and each eFiler who is registered with BFS and is approved to join the case in some role will also be served automatically through a BFS notification when additional documents are filed electronically in that case. They will also be served electronically through a BFS notification when any orders or other documents are issued by OHA in that case. Only registered users have access to the cases they have initiated or joined. There is no public access through BFS to filings in this system.<sup>4</sup>

Filers who do not use BFS will file, serve, and receive documents outside of BFS. Also, an eFiler who uses BFS to eFile a document but is not joined to the case, such as a person seeking to become a party by filing a motion to intervene, will receive service of filings outside of BFS unless and until they are joined to the case. OHA units may send documents electronically by BFS email to persons or entities who have not been joined to a case.

Please note that this Standing Order only applies to the use of BFS and the electronic transmission of documents in a new or pending case before an OHA unit; it does not apply to filings that are required to be made at another Departmental bureau or office. Please consult the bureau or office directly to ask whether they permit documents to be submitted to them electronically.

Section I of this Standing Order provides information about BFS that applies to all OHA Units, and Section II provides information that applies to individual Units. You may use the links below to navigate directly to specific portions of the Standing Order.

[General Provisions for All OHA Units](#)

[Departmental Cases Hearings Division \(DCHD\)](#)

[Interior Board of Indian Appeals \(IBIA\)](#)

[Interior Board of Land Appeals \(IBLA\)](#)

[Office of the Director \(DIR\)](#)

[Terms and Conditions for Use of BFS](#)

The Director may revoke or amend this order at any time. This order creates no vested rights in any person.

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<sup>4</sup> Automatic access to filings in cases before OHA is limited by Statement of Records Notice INTERIOR/OS-09 (80 FR 26291 (May 7, 2015); modification 86 FR 50156 (Sep. 7, 2021)) to individuals involved or otherwise identified in hearings and appeals proceedings. Any other individuals seeking access to filings in cases before OHA must comply with the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. § 552, and the Department of the Interior's FOIA regulations, 43 CFR Part 2.

## I. General Provisions for All OHA Units

Except as provided in Section II of this Standing Order, the provisions set out in Section I of this Standing Order apply to all electronic filings and transmissions made through BFS in proceedings before the following OHA units: (1) Departmental Cases Hearings Division (DCHD), (2) Director's Office (DIR), (3) Interior Board of Indian Appeals (IBIA), and (4) Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA).

**Acceptable Document Formats.** BFS supports the following file types: PDF, DOC, DOCX, and JPEG. Except for JPEG files, all non-PDF documents will be converted to PDF by the eFiling system, and all documents will be electronically stamped in the top right-hand corner of the first page with a date of submission. Documents may not be filed with BFS if they are locked or password protected.

Additional technical details on eFiling are provided on OHA's website in our BFS User Guides.

**Administrative Records.** Unless Unit-specific requirements provide otherwise, administrative records must be eFiled through BFS in PDF format. The administrative record must include an index of its contents, and each page of the record should be labeled with a unique page number (i.e., the record must be Bates stamped). The administrative record should be formatted to be searchable (i.e., by using optical character recognition software), if practicable. An administrative record that is larger than 75 megabytes must be split into smaller parts. Please consult the DOI User Guide for further recommendations.

**Authority to Regulate eFiling.** The OHA Director and any OHA judge may issue orders modifying these procedures for a specific filing or in a specific case, including requiring or allowing any document or all documents in a case to be filed or served using methods other than BFS, including non-electronic methods. The OHA Director and any OHA judge may order anyone who misuses BFS or fails to comply with the regulations and standing orders governing the use of BFS to cease eFiling.

**eFilings with Confidential or Privileged Information.** If you are eFiling a document that contains privileged and/or confidential information, you must consult the BFS eFiling Confidential or Privileged Documents Guide for instructions about how to do so properly. If an eFiler does not follow the procedures for limiting disclosure of confidential information under 43 C.F.R. 4.31, or the procedures for filing privileged information under seal, then they risk exposing that information to other parties to the case.

**eFilings Must Be Timely.** Electronic filings are timely if transmitted to the appropriate OHA unit by 11:59:59 p.m. in the local time zone of that unit on the due date: Mountain Time for the Departmental Cases Hearings Division, and Eastern Time for the Director's Office, Interior Board of Indian Appeals, and Interior Board of Land Appeals. Any document transmitted after 11:59:59 p.m. will be deemed filed the next business day.

eFilers bear the sole responsibility for ensuring that a filing is timely made and assume the risk of any technical problems that may prevent them from eFiling, unless those technical problems are solely attributable to a malfunction of BFS. Although BFS is designed to receive filings at any time, parties are strongly encouraged to file documents well before the filing deadline and during normal business hours in case they encounter technical problems. If an eFiler waits until after the close of business to try to eFile a document and encounters technical problems, no one will be available to help you. If a party is unable to eFile a document because of their own technical problems (including, for example, problems with a user's internet service provider, hardware, or software), or because of their own failure to understand or follow our eFiling instructions, those problems will not excuse an untimely filing. If an eFiler—including those required to eFile—is unable to eFile a document because of such technical problems, they must use an alternate method to file that document on time. Sending a document by electronic means other than through BFS does not constitute timely electronic filing unless otherwise specified.

If an eFiler is prevented from timely eFiling a document solely by a BFS malfunction rather than their own technical problems, then the document will be deemed timely if and only if all of the following criteria are met:

- (1) the eFiler documents the BFS malfunction by providing the BFS Helpdesk ([bfshelpdesk@oha.doi.gov](mailto:bfshelpdesk@oha.doi.gov)) a screenshot or a photo of any error messages they encounter and we confirm that timely eFiling was prevented by the malfunction;
- (2) the eFiler files on the next business day after the filing deadline; and
- (3) we have discretion to excuse the untimeliness under applicable law.

Please note that some filing deadlines are imposed by statute or regulation and are therefore jurisdictional and must be strictly construed; in such cases, untimely filings cannot be excused. Again, parties who use BFS are strongly encouraged to eFile documents well before the filing deadline in case they encounter problems and need to file by other means.

**Reporting BFS Technical Problems.** To report technical problems with BFS, please email [bfshelpdesk@oha.doi.gov](mailto:bfshelpdesk@oha.doi.gov), or call 1-866-367-1272, and select option 7.

**eFiling in Consolidated Cases.** When filing a document in a consolidated case, the document must be filed in the consolidated parent case. Please consult the BFS DOI User Guide or the BFS Non-DOI User Guide, as applicable, for instructions.

**Obligation to Keep BFS Email Address Current.** eFilers are required to notify OHA of any change of email address. Failure to keep your BFS email address current may result in failure to receive filings, orders, or decisions. This obligation is additional to the requirement in 43 C.F.R. § 4.22 to keep your mailing address current.

**Official Business.** BFS may only be used for official agency business. Unauthorized attempts to use BFS are strictly prohibited and may be subject to criminal prosecution, as appropriate. We take precautions to maintain the security, confidentiality, and integrity of the

information that we collect on BFS, including various security technologies. OHA may revoke eFiling privileges for improper use.

**Personally Identifiable or Confidential Business Information.** eFilers should not file documents through BFS that contain personally identifiable information (PII) or confidential business information (CBI) that is not relevant to the matter at issue. eFilers bear sole responsibility for redacting any such PII or CBI contained in the documents they file. PII includes an individual's name in combination with one or more of the following: date and/or place of birth; Social Security number; mother's maiden name; driver's license number, passport number, or other government-issued unique identification number (including tribal enrollment or identification number); financial account number; credit or debit card number; the names of minor children; and biometric data. If a number that is PII must be included in a document (for example, a Social Security number), only the last four digits should be used.

If an eFiler believes that they must eFile a document that contains unredacted CBI or PII and seeks to maintain the confidentiality that applies to that document, that document must be filed under seal. For a detailed explanation of how to eFile documents under seal, please refer to the BFS eFiling Confidential or Privileged Documents Guide on the OHA website.

**Service of eFilings; Consent to Electronic Service.** Bureaus and Offices of the Department of the Interior are deemed to consent to electronic service of eFiled documents through BFS. Copies of case-initiating filings (e.g., Notices of Appeal, Requests for Hearing) may be served at the time an eFiler initiates a matter in BFS by selecting the appropriate Bureau or Office from the drop-down menus on the eFiler case page. Service of case-initiating documents on Bureaus or Offices selected by an eFiler from the drop-down menus on the eFiler case page will occur automatically by a BFS system-generated email.

When a case initiating document is eFiled through BFS, BFS will send all Departmental bureaus and offices that the initiating party selected for service an email notification attaching the case initiating documents (except those eFiled under claim of confidentiality or privilege). Thereafter, when any other document is eFiled through BFS, BFS will send to all other BFS users who were joined to the case in some capacity an email notification without any attachments. These email notices constitute formal service and delivery of the eFiled documents. eFilers must ensure that emails from BFS are not blocked by "spam" filters and should designate [FD-GCM-Support@micrpact.com](mailto:FD-GCM-Support@micrpact.com) as an approved sender in their email software. eFilers are also responsible for monitoring case activity regularly through the BFS website to ensure that they have received all case-related documents.

When service of a document is required to be made on any person or entity that is not registered with BFS or is registered with BFS but has not been joined to the case in some capacity (such as service of a response to a motion to intervene on the person or entity who filed the motion), the eFiler must serve a paper copy of that document on that person or entity in compliance with the relevant regulations.

If any non-DOI person or entity who did not initiate the case wishes to be served eFilings for a case electronically through BFS, they must (1) register with BFS, (2) request through BFS

to join the case in some capacity (for example, as amicus curiae), and (3) be allowed by the OHA unit to join the case. An external person who registers with BFS consents to electronic service of eFilings using BFS and agrees that this service fulfills all regulatory obligations for the service of filed documents.

If a Departmental bureau or office wishes to be represented in the case, the representative must register with BFS and request through BFS to join the case. Once a bureau or office representative is joined, service on the bureau or office will be through the representative. The OHA unit may also elect for BFS to continue issuing notices of eFilings to the bureau or office.

**Signatures.** Electronic documents filed by an eFiler are deemed to be signed by the eFiler for the purposes of any regulation that requires a signature and bind the signatory as if the document was physically signed and filed.

**Transmission of OHA-Issued Documents; Consent to Electronic Transmission.** Consent to receive service of decisions, orders, and documents through BFS is required to register as an eFiler. When an OHA unit issues an order, decision, or other document through BFS, BFS will send an email notification to all persons and entities who initiated or have been joined to the case. That email notice constitutes formal transmission and delivery of the OHA-issued document. eFilers must ensure that emails from BFS are not blocked by “spam” filters and should designate [FD-GCM-Support@micropact.com](mailto:FD-GCM-Support@micropact.com) as an approved sender in their e-mail software. eFilers are also responsible for monitoring case activity regularly through the BFS website to ensure that they have received all case-related documents.

When transmission of an OHA-issued order or other document is required to be made on a person or entity that is not registered with BFS or is registered with BFS but has not been joined to the case in some capacity (such as transmittal of an order for clarification regarding a motion by the person or entity to intervene), OHA units may send that document by paper or electronically by BFS email.

Bureaus and Offices of the Department of the Interior are deemed to consent to receiving OHA-issued orders or other documents by electronic transmission using BFS.

If an external person wishes to receive OHA-issued orders or other documents for a case electronically through BFS, they must (1) register with BFS, (2) request through BFS to join the case as a party or amicus curiae, and (3) be allowed by OHA to join the case.

## II. Provisions Specific to Individual OHA Units

The additional provisions set out here in Section II apply to the specific OHA units listed below.

### **Departmental Cases Hearings Division (DCHD)**

#### New Case Filings:

Beginning March 5, 2025, DCHD will accept eFiled documents through BFS for new cases. We encourage all parties to use BFS to file and serve documents. Directions for using BFS and answers to Frequently Asked Questions can be found in the BFS User Guides and on OHA's web page at: <https://www.doi.gov/oha/bfs/support>.

Any case-initiating documents that are required to be filed with DCHD by statute or regulation may be eFiled using BFS. Examples of case initiating documents include: an Appeal, Complaint, Request for Hearing, Petition for Review, Application for Temporary Relief, or a Petition for a Stay. However, case-initiating documents that are required to be filed with the DOI bureau or office that issued the decision or notice must be filed and served at the location and in the manner required by that bureau or office. A bureau or office that receives case-initiating documents must forward them to DCHD. And by no later than April 4, 2025, those case-initiating documents must be transmitted using BFS, unless the bureau or office receives permission from DCHD to file using an alternative method.

If an eFiler is prevented from timely eFiling a case-initiating document with DCHD due to a BFS malfunction, then the document may be filed by email. An eFiler should document the BFS malfunction by providing the BFS Helpdesk ([bfshelpdesk@oha.doi.gov](mailto:bfshelpdesk@oha.doi.gov)) with a screenshot or a photo of any error messages and email the case-initiating document to DCHD at [dchd@oha.doi.gov](mailto:dchd@oha.doi.gov) by 11:59:59 p.m. Mountain Time on the due date.

#### Cases Pending on March 5, 2025:

Cases pending on March 5, 2025, will not be immediately available for eFiling in BFS. Over the next several months, DCHD will issue written Notices to parties when a case becomes eligible for eFiling through BFS. Parties will then be provided with instructions on how to register for a BFS account and request to join a pending case.

#### Other Methods of Filing and Service:

Although parties are encouraged to eFile using BFS in new cases starting on March 5, 2025, non-DOI parties may continue to file documents using DCHD's email address ([dchd@oha.doi.gov](mailto:dchd@oha.doi.gov)), U.S. mail, hand delivery, or commercial courier. DOI parties are expected to eFile using BFS in new cases by no later than April 4, 2025, unless permission has been received from DCHD to file using an alternative method.

For pending cases, parties may continue to file documents using DCHD's email address ([dchd@oha.doi.gov](mailto:dchd@oha.doi.gov)), U.S. mail, hand delivery, or commercial carrier until they receive a Notice that the case is eligible for eFiling.

Future Filings:

OHA intends to phase out email filings and move to eFiling through BFS as parties become familiar with the system. When that transition occurs, a new Standing Order will issue with specific deadlines for that transition.

Timeliness of Electronic Filings:

To be timely, a document must be electronically filed prior to 11:59:59 p.m. Mountain Time on the due date. Any documents filed after 11:59:59 p.m. Mountain Time will be date stamped for the next business day. In the new BFS system, an automatic date stamp will be affixed on the upper right-hand corner of the first page of the eFiled document showing the date of receipt. For emailed documents, timeliness will be determined by the date and time on the email.



## Interior Board of Indian Appeals (IBIA)

This subsection contains provisions governing proceedings before the IBIA.

- A. Filing a Case Initiating Document During a BFS Malfunction.** If an eFiler is prevented from timely eFiling a notice of appeal or other case initiating document solely by a BFS malfunction rather than their own technical problems, then the document may be filed by email if and only if all of the following criteria are met:
- (1) the eFiler documents the BFS malfunction by providing the BFS Helpdesk ([bfshelpdesk@oha.doi.gov](mailto:bfshelpdesk@oha.doi.gov)) a screenshot or a photo of any error messages they encounter and we confirm that timely eFiling was prevented by the malfunction; and
  - (2) the eFiler emails the case initiating document to the IBIA at [ibia@oha.doi.gov](mailto:ibia@oha.doi.gov) by 11:59:59 p.m. Eastern Time on the due date.
- B. Exceptions for Certain IBIA Cases (Cases Initiated Before March 5, 2025 and WELSA Cases) and Certain Filings (Case Initiating Documents in WELSA Cases and Osage Will Cases).** The General Provisions of Section I of this Standing Order do not apply to the following IBIA proceedings:
1. **Cases Initiated Before March 5, 2025.** No document may be filed through BFS in any case that was initiated at the IBIA before March 5, 2025. In those cases, parties must continue to file documents with the IBIA using U.S. mail, commercial courier, or hand delivery in accordance with 43 C.F.R. § 4.310, with limited exceptions for filing by email or facsimile (fax). Transmission of documents by email or fax may be authorized for particular documents, subject to the conditions below.
    - A party must first contact the IBIA at [ibia@oha.doi.gov](mailto:ibia@oha.doi.gov) and obtain permission to file the particular document electronically. The request must identify the document to be filed, the proposed means of electronic filing (email or fax), the justification for filing the document by electronic means, and how the party intends to serve the document on other interested parties. The IBIA will not entertain standing requests to file all documents in a case electronically. Any document filed electronically without permission will not be accepted.
    - The IBIA may grant permission to file a document by email or fax in extraordinary circumstances. Because documents filed with the IBIA by U.S. mail are filed as of the date of mailing, extraordinary circumstances do not include the fact that a filing is due that day.
    - Any email filing must be sent to [ibia@oha.doi.gov](mailto:ibia@oha.doi.gov) and should identify in the subject line the appeal by name and docket number if one has been assigned.
    - A filing that is authorized or required to be filed by email or fax in a case that was initiated before March 5, 2025, will be considered timely filed if it is transmitted to the IBIA by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on the due date. A document transmitted after 5:00 p.m. will be deemed filed the next business day.

In addition, a party may serve documents on another party by email or fax if the other party has given written consent to service by such means. Before a party requests

authorization from the IBIA to file a particular document by email or fax, the party is encouraged to contact all other interested parties to seek their written consent to receive service of the document electronically. If any parties consent to receive service electronically, the certificate of service included with the document filed with the IBIA, regardless of whether the document is filed electronically, must show the email address or fax number for each party served electronically.

2. **White Earth Reservation Land Settlement Act (WELSA) Cases.** The Standing Order on WELSA Proceedings addresses WELSA proceedings before the IBIA governed by 43 C.F.R. Part 4, Subparts D or H.
3. **Case Initiating Documents in ISDA Cases.** The regulations governing appeals taken under the Indian Self-Determination Act (ISDA) set out in 25 C.F.R. Parts 900 and 1000 do not authorize parties to file notices of appeal in ISDA cases electronically. Instead, those regulations require notices of appeal to be filed with the IBIA either by hand-delivery or by certified mail (return receipt requested). 25 C.F.R. § 900.158(b); *id.* § 1000.432 (incorporating the requirements of 25 C.F.R. § 900.158(b) by reference). For that reason, notices of appeal in ISDA cases may not be filed through BFS and the General Provisions of Section I of this Standing Order do not apply to those case initiating documents. This restriction only applies to the notice of appeal: Once such a notice of appeal has been filed and served according to those regulations, and the case has been opened in BFS, subsequent documents in the appeal may be filed electronically through BFS.
4. **Case Initiating Documents in Osage Will Cases.** The regulations at 25 C.F.R. Part 17 govern actions by the Osage Agency Superintendent (Superintendent), Bureau of Indian Affairs, to approve or disapprove the wills of deceased Osage Indians. Those regulations require a notice of intent to appeal the Superintendent's action to be filed with the Superintendent and that the appeal must be served on the Superintendent. 25 C.F.R. § 17.14(b). For that reason, case initiating documents in Osage Will cases may not be sent to the IBIA through BFS and the General Provisions of Section I of this Standing Order do not apply to those case initiating documents. Instead, the Superintendent is responsible for transmitting the entire record to the IBIA. *Id.* Once the Superintendent has transmitted the record through BFS as a "DOI User (Transmittal or Referral)" and the case has been opened in BFS, subsequent documents in the appeal may be filed electronically through BFS.

### **C. Administrative Records and Probate Records.**

In administrative appeals within the scope of 43 C.F.R. § 4.330 that are initiated on or after March 5, 2025, the administrative record must be transmitted to the IBIA through BFS, unless the submitting bureau or office requests and is granted permission to transmit the record through other electronic means or non-electronically. If the administrative record is transmitted through BFS and it contains privileged or confidential documents, those documents must be uploaded separately to ensure that they are protected from inadvertent disclosure. Please consult Appendix 3 of the DOI User Guide for detailed instructions on eFiling privileged or confidential

documents. Any request to transmit an administrative record outside BFS must explain why it would be impracticable to transmit the record through BFS.

In probate appeals within the scope of 43 C.F.R. § 4.320 that are initiated on or after March 5, 2025, the probate record may be transmitted to the IBIA either through BFS or non-electronically. If the probate record is transmitted through BFS, the entire record must be uploaded using the option for eFiling privileged documents to ensure that the record is protected from inadvertent disclosure. Please consult Appendix 3 of the DOI User Guide for further instructions on eFiling probate records.

Each individual electronic file that is uploaded into BFS will appear in the docket card as a separate docket entry. To keep the docket card streamlined, administrative or probate records that are transmitted through BFS should be uploaded in as few separate electronic files (i.e., parts) as possible. The maximum file size for each electronic file is 75 MB, which should allow most administrative or probate records to be uploaded as one electronic file, including the certification of the record, the table of contents, and the record. Administrative or probate records that are transmitted through BFS must be Bates stamped. Please consult the DOI User Guide for further recommendations on the format of the administrative or probate record.

In administrative appeals and probate appeals that were initiated before March 5, 2025, the administrative or probate record must be transmitted to the IBIA through U.S. mail, commercial courier, or hand delivery; however, the record may be paper or electronic (such as a compact disc or thumb drive).

## **Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA)**

This subsection contains provisions governing proceedings before the IBLA.

### **General**

While we encourage everyone participating in an appeal before the IBLA to use BFS to electronically file and serve documents, parties may continue to electronically file documents by email ([ibla@oha.doi.gov](mailto:ibla@oha.doi.gov)) through April 4, 2025. If a party cannot use BFS after April 4, 2025, then the party may file documents by hand delivery, mail, or commercial courier.

### **Case Initiation**

An appellant must file case-initiating documents—for example, a notice of appeal and, if necessary, a petition for a stay—with the bureau or office that issued the decision the appellant is appealing. The appellant must file the case-initiating document in the manner and format the bureau or office requires. The appellant may file a courtesy copy of those case-initiating documents with the IBLA through BFS. After April 4, 2025, anyone wishing to electronically file courtesy copies of case-initiating documents with the IBLA must use BFS to do so. Directions for transmitting those documents are provided in the BFS Non-DOI User Guide. Appellants may no longer use email to electronically transmit documents to the IBLA after April 4, 2025.

A bureau or office that receives case-initiating documents must forward them to the IBLA, and after April 4, 2025, the bureau or office must do so through BFS; emailed documents will not be accepted after that date. Directions for forwarding case-initiating documents through BFS are provided in the DOI User Guide.

### **Joining Pending Cases**

Participants in cases that are pending at the IBLA before March 5, 2025, may join the case in BFS by sending a “Join a Case” request through BFS. Instructions for sending a “Join a Case” request are provided in both the DOI and Non-DOI User Guides.

### **Bureau or Office Record Submission**

On April 7, 2025, the IBLA will discontinue the SharePoint site dedicated to record submissions, and bureaus and offices must submit their records through BFS. The IBLA asks that the bureau or office Bates-stamp each page in the digitized record and include an index specifying the record’s contents and the corresponding Bates stamp number. Records submitted through BFS should be uploaded in as few separate electronic parts as possible. The maximum file size for each upload is 75 MB. Please consult the BFS DOI User Guide for further instructions.

### **Office of the Director (DIR)**

While we encourage everyone participating in an appeal or hearing before the OHA Director to use BFS to electronically file and serve documents, parties may continue to electronically file documents by email ([dir@oha.doi.gov](mailto:dir@oha.doi.gov)) through April 4, 2025.

New appeals or requests for hearing before the Office of the Director (DIR) may be initiated in BFS starting on February 26, 2025. The Interior Business Center, Payroll Operations Division, and all Bureaus or Offices may begin using BFS to initiate OHA review of an employee waiver request or waiver appeal by submitting an Administrative Report using the “DOI Transmittal Only” instructions in the DOI User Manual.

Requests to join a DIR case in BFS will only be granted in cases that were initiated on or after February 26, 2025.

Parties in DIR cases that were initiated prior to February 26, 2025, are encouraged to file by email to [dir@oha.doi.gov](mailto:dir@oha.doi.gov). A party may be served by email if that party agrees to email service in writing, and the serving party also files by email an appropriate certificate of service. OHA also encourages each party to provide a valid email address to facilitate the issuance of orders and decisions by email. The Office of the Director will email orders and/or decisions to a party who has filed documents by email, or any other party who requests to receive orders and/or decisions by email.

So ordered.

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Janet Lin  
Director, Office of Hearings and Appeals

**TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR USE OF BISON FILE AND SERVE**  
**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**  
**OFFICE OF HEARINGS AND APPEALS**

To register for an account with Bison File and Serve (BFS), the Office of Hearings and Appeals' (OHA) electronic filing (eFiling) system, you must accept and adhere to the terms and conditions of use listed below. Failure to accept and adhere to these terms and conditions could result in denial of access to BFS.

**Terms and Conditions of Use**

By registering for electronic filing with BFS, the User must

1. Provide accurate and complete information during the account registration process.
2. Keep all registration information current. The User is responsible for notifying OHA of any change in record address.
3. Use BFS only for legitimate case-related purposes. Any improper use may result in the revocation of eFiling privileges.
4. Be responsible for the security and use of the User's login information. Any eFiling or other interaction with BFS using a registered user's ID and password is deemed to be made by that User or with that User's express authorization.
5. Immediately notify OHA of any breach of the user's security, including any use of a User ID and password by an individual not expressly authorized to do so by the User.
6. Refrain from using any software that collects, intercepts, or otherwise mines information or content from BFS.
7. Ensure that the document to be filed has been screened for viruses and malware and is free of all viruses and malware prior to submission.