

National Archives



Archivist of the United States

Washington, DC 20408

May 1, 2007

The Honorable Fred Fielding
Counsel to the President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Fred:

Thank you for taking the time out of your crowded schedule to have lunch with me last Wednesday. I greatly enjoyed our conversation.

I also wanted to thank you for meeting with key members of NARA's senior staff that same morning. They appreciated the update on current issues relating to White House emails. We believe that it is essential that the White House move with the utmost dispatch both in assessing any problems that may exist with preserving emails on the Executive Office of the President email system, and in taking whatever action may be necessary to restore any missing emails. NARA has gone through three Presidential transitions involving the transfer of electronic records and, in each of these transitions, we experienced some problems with this issue. Based on this previous experience and similar problems experienced by prior Administrations, a 'restoration' project can easily take more than one year to complete.

Additionally, given both the extensive volume of White House emails that NARA will need to ingest at the end of the Administration – much more than in any previous Administration – and the complexity of migrating electronic records, it is extremely important that NARA staff begin meeting as soon as possible with relevant staff of the Office of Administration (OA). In order to ensure a successful migration of both presidential and federal electronic records to NARA, we need to acquire a clear knowledge of the current White House electronic systems and the current plans of OA for both restoration of any non-archived emails and transfer of the preserved emails to a new system. NARA remains available to provide you and the Office of Administration with our expertise and appropriate guidance, as we have previous Administrations, as you work to solve any problems.

My staff is also available to work closely with you and other relevant White House officials in preparing for the January 2009 Presidential transition. As NARA staff has mentioned in previous meetings, we believe that now is the time to begin regular meetings in order to discuss a variety of issues including: 1) when to begin formal move planning, including meeting with the military; 2) the need to scope out and inventory the

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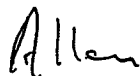
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volume of materials that will be transferred to the National Archives at the end of the Administration for deposit into the George W. Bush Presidential Library; 3) establishment of a project site for storage of these records until the Library is built; 4) White House needs for NARA staff in assisting with the move; and 5) other issues that will require White House assistance in order for NARA to physically carry out the move.

Please feel free to discuss these coordination issues with Gary M. Stern, General Counsel, and Nancy Smith, Director of Presidential Materials.

Thank you again for your support and assistance.

Sincerely,



ALLEN WEINSTEIN
Archivist of the United States

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