

**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL: Suspicious Link]Re: Request 2025-FSA-08431-F - Bocinsky - Final Response  
**Date:** Thursday, September 4, 2025 at 14:45:17 Mountain Daylight Time  
**From:** Bocinsky, Kyle  
**To:** Vander Linden, Christina - FPAC-FBC, MO  
**CC:** Nagel, Carol - FPAC-FBC, ND, Nguyen, Hani - FPAC-FBC, MN, Vander Linden, Christina - FPAC-FBC, MO  
**Attachments:** image001.png, image002.png

Thank you. There were no code/scripts included, so perhaps they incidentally attached two of the geodatabase and no code. I appreciate you checking!

Best,  
Kyle

**Kyle Bocinsky, PhD**

**Director of Climate Extension, Montana Climate Office, University of Montana**  
**Asst. Research Professor, Society and Conservation, University of Montana**

*The University of Montana acknowledges that we are in the aboriginal territories of the Salish and Kalispel people. We honor the path they have shown us in caring for this place for the generations to come.*

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**From:** Vander Linden, Christina - FPAC-FBC, MO <[christina.vanderlinden@usda.gov](mailto:christina.vanderlinden@usda.gov)>

**Date:** Thursday, September 4, 2025 at 13:50

**To:** Bocinsky, Kyle <[kyle.bocinsky@umontana.edu](mailto:kyle.bocinsky@umontana.edu)>

**Cc:** Nagel, Carol - FPAC-FBC, ND <[carol.nagel@usda.gov](mailto:carol.nagel@usda.gov)>, Nguyen, Hani - FPAC-FBC, MN <[hani.nguyen@usda.gov](mailto:hani.nguyen@usda.gov)>, Vander Linden, Christina - FPAC-FBC, MO <[christina.vanderlinden@usda.gov](mailto:christina.vanderlinden@usda.gov)>

**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL: Suspicious Link]Re: Request 2025-FSA-08431-F - Bocinsky - Final Response

Hi Kyle,

They said it contained code/scripts. Not sure what that means. Let me reach out to them and see if they just sent it twice.

v/r

Christina Vander Linden

*Government Information Specialist*

External Affairs Division | Freedom of Information Act Team

 **USDA** Farm Production and Conservation – Business Center  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

p: (816) 823-2669

e: [christina.vanderlinden@usda.gov](mailto:christina.vanderlinden@usda.gov) | FOIA Team e: [SM.FP.FOIA@usda.gov](mailto:SM.FP.FOIA@usda.gov)

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**From:** Bocinsky, Kyle <[kyle.bocinsky@umontana.edu](mailto:kyle.bocinsky@umontana.edu)>

**Sent:** Thursday, September 4, 2025 2:39 PM

**To:** Vander Linden, Christina - FPAC-FBC, MO <[christina.vanderlinden@usda.gov](mailto:christina.vanderlinden@usda.gov)>  
**Cc:** Nagel, Carol - FPAC-FBC, ND <[carol.nagel@usda.gov](mailto:carol.nagel@usda.gov)>; Nguyen, Hani - FPAC-FBC, MN <[hani.nguyen@usda.gov](mailto:hani.nguyen@usda.gov)>; Vander Linden, Christina - FPAC-FBC, MO <[christina.vanderlinden@usda.gov](mailto:christina.vanderlinden@usda.gov)>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL: Suspicious Link]Re: Request 2025-FSA-08431-F - Bocinsky - Final Response

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**Send Questions or Suspicious messages to:** [Spam.Abuse@usda.gov](mailto:Spam.Abuse@usda.gov)

Hmm, the content of those two files in there are identical to one another. They each contain the geodatabase that contains the current county boundaries. Did the program owner tell you what they were supposed to contain? I wonder if it just got attached to their communication twice by accident.

Thanks for any clarification you can provide.

Best,  
Kyle

**Kyle Bocinsky, PhD**

**Director of Climate Extension,** Montana Climate Office, University of Montana  
**Asst. Research Professor,** Society and Conservation, University of Montana

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**From:** Bocinsky, Kyle <[kyle.bocinsky@umontana.edu](mailto:kyle.bocinsky@umontana.edu)>

**Date:** Thursday, September 4, 2025 at 13:31

**To:** Vander Linden, Christina - FPAC-FBC, MO <[christina.vanderlinden@usda.gov](mailto:christina.vanderlinden@usda.gov)>

**Cc:** Nagel, Carol - FPAC-FBC, ND <[carol.nagel@usda.gov](mailto:carol.nagel@usda.gov)>, Nguyen, Hani - FPAC-FBC, MN <[hani.nguyen@usda.gov](mailto:hani.nguyen@usda.gov)>, Vander Linden, Christina - FPAC-FBC, MO <[christina.vanderlinden@usda.gov](mailto:christina.vanderlinden@usda.gov)>

**Subject:** Re: Request 2025-FSA-08431-F - Bocinsky - Final Response

That worked! I'll have a look at the files and let you know that I can open them.

Cheers!  
Kyle

**Kyle Bocinsky, PhD**

**Director of Climate Extension,** Montana Climate Office, University of Montana  
**Asst. Research Professor,** Society and Conservation, University of Montana

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**From:** Vander Linden, Christina - FPAC-FBC, MO <[christina.vanderlinden@usda.gov](mailto:christina.vanderlinden@usda.gov)>  
**Date:** Thursday, September 4, 2025 at 13:30  
**To:** Bocinsky, Kyle <[kyle.bocinsky@umontana.edu](mailto:kyle.bocinsky@umontana.edu)>  
**Cc:** Nagel, Carol - FPAC-FBC, ND <[carol.nagel@usda.gov](mailto:carol.nagel@usda.gov)>, Nguyen, Hani - FPAC-FBC, MN <[hani.nguyen@usda.gov](mailto:hani.nguyen@usda.gov)>, Vander Linden, Christina - FPAC-FBC, MO <[christina.vanderlinden@usda.gov](mailto:christina.vanderlinden@usda.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: Request 2025-FSA-08431-F - Bocinsky - Final Response

Sure, Just resent the invite.

v/r  
Christina Vander Linden  
*Government Information Specialist*  
External Affairs Division | Freedom of Information Act Team

 Farm Production and Conservation – Business Center  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
p: (816) 823-2669  
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**From:** Bocinsky, Kyle <[kyle.bocinsky@umontana.edu](mailto:kyle.bocinsky@umontana.edu)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 4, 2025 2:28 PM  
**To:** SM.FPAC.BC.FOIA <[SM.FP.FOIA@usda.gov](mailto:SM.FP.FOIA@usda.gov)>  
**Cc:** Vander Linden, Christina - FPAC-FBC, MO <[christina.vanderlinden@usda.gov](mailto:christina.vanderlinden@usda.gov)>; Nagel, Carol - FPAC-FBC, ND <[carol.nagel@usda.gov](mailto:carol.nagel@usda.gov)>; Nguyen, Hani - FPAC-FBC, MN <[hani.nguyen@usda.gov](mailto:hani.nguyen@usda.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: Request 2025-FSA-08431-F - Bocinsky - Final Response

Hi there. Thank you for this. I am having some trouble accessing the files in Box, likely because the University of Montana associates our Box accounts with a different email address than the alias they have us use for correspondence. Could you kindly try sharing that box folder with [kyle.bocinsky@umt.edu](mailto:kyle.bocinsky@umt.edu)?

Thank you!

Best,  
Kyle

**Kyle Bocinsky, PhD**

**Director of Climate Extension, Montana Climate Office, University of Montana**  
**Asst. Research Professor, Society and Conservation, University of Montana**

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**From:** SM.FPAC.BC.FOIA <[SM.FP.FOIA@usda.gov](mailto:SM.FP.FOIA@usda.gov)>  
**Date:** Thursday, September 4, 2025 at 13:10  
**To:** Bocinsky, Kyle <[kyle.bocinsky@umontana.edu](mailto:kyle.bocinsky@umontana.edu)>, SM.FPAC.BC.FOIA

<[SM.FP.FOIA@usda.gov](mailto:SM.FP.FOIA@usda.gov)>

**Cc:** Vander Linden, Christina - FPAC-FBC, MO <[christina.vanderlinden@usda.gov](mailto:christina.vanderlinden@usda.gov)>, Nagel, Carol - FPAC-FBC, ND <[carol.nagel@usda.gov](mailto:carol.nagel@usda.gov)>, Nguyen, Hani - FPAC-FBC, MN <[hani.nguyen@usda.gov](mailto:hani.nguyen@usda.gov)>

**Subject:** Request 2025-FSA-08431-F - Bocinsky - Final Response  
Dr. Bocinsky,

This responds to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request (copy attached) dated July 17, 2025 and assigned control number 2025-FSA-08431-F.

In response to your request, we compiled and are releasing in full, the National Drought Mitigation Center (NDMC)s geodatabase that contains the current county boundaries.

According to the program owner, the boundaries are from the ESRI dataset from 2008 and are considered the industry standard for all geopolitical boundaries and reference layers. The NDMC obtained these layers prior to the 2008 Farm Bill first that included relief programs associated with the USDM as county level statistics and maps were available when the transition to GIS map development took place. The NDMC uses this data to have a consistent value for the various counties that have not changed since they were first incorporated in 2008. The NDMC has had to update some counties during this time due to changes made in redrawing and/or renaming counties and with new FIPS creations. The last such change being in 2021 that included an Alaska boundary change. This was a relatively simple change as Alaska doesn't touch any other states with the updates not affecting the rest of the United States. The other most recent change was in 2019 that included a county name and FIPS change in South Dakota and that did not require a geometry change. The next anticipated changes that will be required are in Connecticut due to a redraw and renaming of their county level jurisdictions that were initiated at the state level. This change will be made within the existing detailed boundaries and shapefiles of these new jurisdiction units. We will be redrawing the internal boundaries based on the best available data, either from the U.S. Census, the state of Connecticut, or commercial (ESRI) sources and the NDMC will need to work directly with USDA to determine exactly how these will be implemented with regards to programs triggered by the USDM. This process has been our standard for updating changing geometry in base datasets that are used in the weekly calculations. All the data utilized in the weekly calculations are freely available on the United States Drought Monitor website under the "data" tab: <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/Data.aspx>. The final data are updated each week during the official release of the USDM map and associated statistics and data information. These data are also the same data utilized in the making of the North American Drought Monitor. The NDMC is the official home and archive of all the data, maps, and information related to the United States Drought Monitor, and all this information is freely available at <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>

Your responsive records have been uploaded to box, a secure way for us to share data. You should receive an invitation to box from the site. If you don't receive it, please visit <https://account.box.com/login> to retrieve your documents. Please retrieve your documents on or before: **December 3, 2025**. If you have any problems retrieving your documents, contact us.  
Request 2025-FSA-08431-F is officially closed.

We trust that this information fully satisfies your request. If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Government Information (GI) Specialist Christina Vander Linden at 816-823-2669. If GI Specialist Christina Vander Linden is not available, please contact GI Specialist Carol Nagel at 701-530-2107 or GI Specialist Hani Nguyen at 651-602-7848. We can also be reached at the group e-mail address [SM.FP.FOIA@usda.gov](mailto:SM.FP.FOIA@usda.gov).

Sincerely,

*Patrick McLoughlin*

Patrick McLoughlin

FOIA Officer

FPAC-BC External Affairs Division | FOIA Team

FOIA Team e: [SM.FP.FOIA@usda.gov](mailto:SM.FP.FOIA@usda.gov)



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