

FBI Says It Can't Meet Deadline On FOI Requests

By Robert Pear

Washington Star Staff Writer

With 4,600 Freedom of Information Act requests pending and a backlog of four to six months, the FBI says it cannot now or in the foreseeable future comply with the time limits established by law.

But the agency is not seeking any additional funds or employees to respond to the growing number of information requests.

FBI Director William H. Webster is scheduled to outline the FBI's problems in an appearance today before the House Government Operations subcommittee on government information, headed by Rep. Richardson Preyer, D-N.C.

In a letter to key members of Congress, Webster said that budget constraints and an increasing workload made it impossible for the FBI to comply with time limits of the Freedom of Information Act.

The act requires agencies to respond to requests within 10 working days and allows a 10-day extension in "unusual circumstances."

The FBI is getting Freedom of Information requests at the rate of 72 a day, Webster said.

2/28/79