

JAY INSLEE
Governor



JAMES WEAVER
Director &
State Chief Information Officer

STATE OF WASHINGTON

WASHINGTON TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS

Washington's Consolidated Technology Services Agency
1500 Jefferson Street SE • Olympia, Washington 98504-1501

January 23, 2019

Dear Auditor McCarthy:

On behalf of the audited agencies, thank you for the opportunity to review and respond to the State Auditor's Office (SAO) performance audit report Continuing Opportunities to Improve State IT Security – 2019.

We appreciate the SAO's continued investment toward improving the state's IT security. The audited agencies have found immense value in these performance audits.

We agree that the security of state agency IT systems and data underpins the stability of government operations, and the safety and well-being of the state and its residents. Protecting these systems is of paramount interest to us.

We appreciate the SAO's recognition of the improvements agencies have taken to better protect systems and data — and align their security program with some leading practices. We agree that there is opportunity to further strengthen our IT systems and have an ongoing commitment to do so. Strengthening the state's IT posture is a continuous responsibility of every state agency.

Please thank your team for their collaborative approach throughout this performance audit. We continue to welcome the SAO's observations and recommendations of what to improve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James Weaver".

James Weaver
Director & State Chief Information Officer

cc: David Postman, Chief of Staff, Office of the Governor
Kelly Wicker, Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of the Governor
Keith Phillips, Director of Policy, Office of the Governor
David Schumacher, Director, Office of Financial Management
Inger Brinck, Director, Results Washington, Office of the Governor
Tammy Firkins, Performance Audit Liaison, Results Washington, Office of the Governor
John Cooper, Sr. Performance Project Manager, Results Washington, Office of the Governor
Vinod Brahmapuram, State Chief Information Security Officer, Washington Technology Solutions
Scott Bream, State Information Policy Officer, Washington Technology Solutions
Scott Frank, Director of Performance Audit, Office of the Washington State Auditor

OFFICIAL STATE CABINET AGENCY RESPONSE TO THE PERFORMANCE AUDIT ON CONTINUING OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE STATE IT SECURITY –JAN. 23, 2020

This management response to the State Auditor’s Office (SAO) performance audit report received January 2, 2020, is provided by the State’s Chief Information Officer on behalf of the audited agencies.

SAO PERFORMANCE AUDIT OBJECTIVES:

The SAO sought to answer this question:

1. Can selected agencies make their IT systems more secure, and better align their IT security practices with leading practices?
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SAO Recommendations to the four selected state agencies: to help strengthen IT security programs, and to protect agency systems and the information within those systems, we recommend:

1. Continue remediating vulnerabilities identified during the security testing, starting with those that most significantly affect the agencies.
2. Consider further aligning agency IT security programs with leading practices recommended in the *Center for Internet Security (CIS) Controls*.
3. Identify and continue to periodically assess the agency’s IT security needs and resources, including personnel and technology, to mature and maintain sufficient security.

STATE RESPONSE:

Agencies embrace their responsibility to continuously improve State IT security. We agree with the opportunities for improvement identified by the SAO to strengthen IT security and are committed to ongoing assessment and improvement. The audited agencies have already made improvements and will continue to work diligently to address the findings. Agencies will also consider further aligning IT security programs with the leading practices recommended in the CIS Controls. To leverage leading practices, the Office of Cybersecurity will use the findings and observations of this audit to work with all state agencies to better improve the state’s security posture.

Action Steps and Time Frame

- Each audited agency will establish a timeline to address vulnerabilities, improvements and considerations identified. *By March 31, 2020.*
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