

Testimony before the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform  
U.S. House of Representatives

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Good afternoon Chairman Chaffetz, Ranking Member Cummings, and distinguished members of the Committee. My name is Sylvia Burns and I currently serve as the Chief Information Officer (CIO) for the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI). We appreciate the opportunity to testify regarding DOI's efforts to secure and protect agency, customer and employee data in the wake of the recently discovered cyber intrusion. Additionally, we appreciate having had the opportunity to provide a classified briefing on the cyber intrusion for members of your Committee staff, and other congressional staff, on May 21, 2015.

Cyber intruders executed very sophisticated tactics to obtain unauthorized access to Office of Personnel Management (OPM) data, hosted in a DOI data center, which contains sensitive personally identifiable information (PII). This incident was, and remains under active and ongoing investigation. At present, the investigation has not discovered evidence that any data, other than OPM data, was exfiltrated.

Concurrent with the ongoing investigation, DOI initiated a major planning effort to address short, medium and long-term remediation in order to strengthen our security protections and reduce risks to the Department, our employees, our customers and our partners. DOI takes the privacy and security of this data very seriously. We are working to support the current investigation regarding the incident affecting OPM data and to minimize the risk of future intrusions and their potential impact.

## **Background**

In April, the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) U.S. Computer Emergency Readiness Team (US-CERT) informed DOI about potential malicious activity, which was later determined to be an advanced persistent threat, on DOI's network.

As soon as DOI became aware of the suspicious activity, we began working with US-CERT, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and other Federal agencies to initiate an investigation and determine what information may have been compromised. DOI allowed DHS and the other investigating agencies immediate access to the DOI's computer systems, and DOI dedicated staff to support the investigation.

Although, there is evidence that the adversary had access to the DOI data center's overall environment, today the investigation has not discovered evidence that any data, other than OPM data, was exfiltrated. It should be noted that DOI also performs shared services for other agencies. The investigation has not discovered evidence that any of its shared service customer data was exfiltrated. However, the investigation remains ongoing.

## Remediation

Concurrent with the ongoing investigation, DOI immediately initiated a major planning effort to address short, medium and long-term remediation to strengthen our cybersecurity protections. We undertook those efforts in the context of other cybersecurity improvements, which were already underway pursuant to the Department's commitment to the Administration's cybersecurity cross agency priority (CAP) goals, as well as DHS's continuous diagnostics and mitigation (CDM) program. We have now accelerated our work on some of those activities, while also devising and implementing other security measures with the advice, guidance and consultation of investigating agencies with expertise related to this particular threat.

DOI is currently employing a comprehensive, multi-pronged remediation strategy to prevent, detect and act against malicious activity on our network in order to respond and recover following an incident. Central to this effort are measures to protect the data of our employees, customers and partners.

Activities that are underway include:

- We are working with DHS and our bureaus and offices to scan for malicious indicators across the entire DOI network.
- As part of DHS's Binding Operational Directive (BOD) we are identifying and mitigating critical Information Technology (IT) security vulnerabilities for all internet facing systems.
- The Secretary and Deputy Secretary expanded on DHS's BOD by directing my office – the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) – to take the lead in mitigating critical vulnerabilities for all of DOI's IT systems.
- We are acquiring and implementing new capabilities that will help us to detect and respond quickly to new intrusions. We continue to meet with interagency partners to learn about their activities and leverage that knowledge to continue to make additional improvements to our cyber security posture at DOI.
- We are fully enabling two factor authentication for privileged users (e.g., system administrators, etc.), as well as regular end-users.

DOI's existing long-term plans include several agency-wide strategic initiatives. For example, DOI is continuing its commitment to DHS's CDM program, which includes meeting our goal to complete the first round of activities around implementing hardware and software asset management. We are entering the second phase of DHS's CDM program activities. This will give DOI the ability to do application whitelisting, network access control to hardware, and dashboarding functionality to provide a comprehensive view of the Department's security posture.

Another important component of our long-term strategic plan includes strengthening DOI's cybersecurity and privacy workforce so that we have knowledgeable and experienced people to address current and future threats facing the agency. Having enough capable and dedicated cybersecurity, privacy and IT operations staff is critical to responding to threats and incidents, and sustaining normal operations following an intrusion.

Additionally, we are designing and implementing increased network segmentation so that, if an intrusion occurs within one component of our network, we can better limit the extent of the potential exposure. We are also evaluating data protection technologies such as information rights management for potential future investments. This will likely drive the modernization of legacy IT systems that cannot currently support data protections.

### **Conclusion**

Again, DOI takes the privacy and security of its data very seriously. We are committed to supporting the continuing investigation regarding this incident affecting OPM data. Furthermore, we will continue to be an active participant in the ongoing efforts by the Federal government to improve our nation's overall cybersecurity posture.

Chairman Chaffetz, Ranking Member Cummings, and Members of the Committee, this concludes my prepared statement. I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

## Sylvia Burns - BIO



Ms. Sylvia Burns serves as the Chief Information Office (CIO) for the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI).

Ms. Burns initially joined the federal government as a Presidential Management Intern in 1994 after completing her Master's Degree in Business Management and Policy from the State University of New York at Stony Brook. Her public service began at the U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service at the International Trade Administration of the U.S. Department of Commerce, where she held several positions over 12 years. She served as the first Chief Architect at the International Trade Administration, where she led several high-priority technology projects. These included the selection of a worldwide Customer Relationship Management solution to manage the organization's export promotion activities and the deployment of a secure remote network access system.

Ms. Burns joined DOI in 2006 where she served as the Director of Information Planning in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs OCIO. She was in charge of managing the organization's Enterprise Architecture, Capital Planning and Investment Control activities, information technology (IT) budget and acquisitions, as well as IT policy. She played a pivotal role in the Indian Affairs reconnection to the Internet in 2008 after the organization was required to disconnect by court order in 2001.

In August 2009, Ms. Burns officially assumed the position as the Division Chief for Portfolio Management within Interior's Departmental Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO). As the Division Chief, Ms. Burns was responsible for the management and oversight of the Department's approximately \$1 billion information technology (IT) investment portfolio and Capital Planning and Investment Control (CPIC) activities. She was the team leader for the DOI Innovations and Efficiencies Team (DIET) that triggered a grassroots effort to improve the operational efficiency of the Department's highly fragmented IT infrastructure. This contributed significantly to the Department's decision to centralize all IT under the Department's CIO in December 2010. In March 2014, Ms. Burns was named as acting CIO for DOI and became the permanent CIO in August 2014.

In 2006, Ms. Burns graduated from the Council in Excellence in Government's eGov Fellowship program and has been a senior fellow since that time. In October 2010, Ms. Burns was certified by the Office of Personnel Management for appointment to the Senior Executive Service following her completion of Interior's Senior Executive Service Candidate Development Program. Her experience includes private sector research and data analysis consulting, as well as work in international trade.