

**STATEMENT OF VAUGHN NOGA
Chief Information Officer & Deputy Assistant Administrator
Office of Mission Support – Environmental Information
Environmental Protection Agency**

**BEFORE THE
Subcommittee on Government Operations
U.S. House of Representatives**

**HEARING ON
Federal Information Technology Acquisition Reform Act (FITARA)
July 28, 2022**

Chairman Connolly, Ranking Member Hice, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the invitation to discuss Agency perspectives on improving the Federal Information Technology Acquisition Reform Act (FITARA) scorecard. As a Tri-chair for the Federal CIO Council Enterprise Operations (E-Ops) committee, we were asked to work across the Federal CIO community to develop recommendations to improve existing measures and offer new measures for consideration. I commend this committee for its continued focus on improving how we manage and modernize our Information Technology portfolios. The FITARA scorecard and the underlying measures provide focus and priority to the CIO community, and this committee's continuous review, consideration, and incorporation of new standards demonstrate how important a secure, available, and modernized IT environment are to the Federal Government.

Throughout my career with the EPA, I have worked with a deeply committed and passionate cadre of Information Technology and Information Security professionals. Collectively, we have shaped and modernized how IT services are delivered, enabling our workforce to respond to mission priorities regardless of where they perform their work. At the EPA, I use the results of the FITARA scorecard to drive Agency priorities and investments. In the last four years, the scorecard has become a visual representation of our success and a reminder of areas we need to maintain continued focus. The evolution of this valuable tool will ensure that we continue to focus on the modernization, optimization, and security of our IT assets.

Data Center Optimization Initiative (DCOI)

The EPA has successfully consolidated EPA Data Centers and localized computer rooms to two Tiered Data Centers. In addition to consolidating those data centers, we identified opportunities to maximize space use by offering available space to the Federal family – reducing the need for other agencies to make data center investments. In the past four years, the Agency established enterprise cloud environments with two commercial cloud providers to help further expand virtualization and the Cloud Smart strategy. We are reaping the benefits of cloud computing capabilities – improving our agility, performance, and consistency with application deployments.

EPA will continue to prioritize further reducing capital and support expenditures associated with legacy server and storage environments. Over the past two months, I have been meeting with all EPA Regions and Programs and that has been the focus of our conversation. The forward focus for EPA will be a Cloud Smart rationalization of applications to drive application consolidation and cloud adoption.

Focus on Cybersecurity

EPA's mission is to protect human health and the environment. One key component in delivering EPA's mission is to ensure we properly safeguard our information and information technology environment. As a result, Cybersecurity is one of EPA's top priorities and it is critically important that we maintain the necessary cyber defenses to enable us to identify and respond to the rising and increased sophistication of cyber threats such as Print Nightmare and Log4j.

To safeguard its IT environments, EPA deployed several defense-in-depth mechanisms such as network segmentation for High Value and critical assets, multifactor authentication, and data encryption. EPA's Continuous Diagnostic and Mitigation (CDM) program was a big driver in modernizing our asset and vulnerability management programs enabling integration across EPA's on-premise and cloud environments, including integration into the DHS CDM dashboard. As a result, EPA was able to quickly assess its environment and remediate the Log4j vulnerability across its Enterprise. To build upon this progress EPA has developed Agency-wide Long Term Performance Goals for full compliance with the Cybersecurity Executive Order, including maturing our Zero Trust Architecture capabilities. EPA implemented a Cyber Sprint focused on the continued implementation of the key security measures outlined in the Zero Trust Architecture including maturing our enterprise logging capability.

Recognizing cybersecurity threats and attacks will continually increase in number and sophistication it's important to maintain a federal-wide awareness and priority on implementing collective defenses to safeguard our critical information and information systems. The CISA Zero Trust Maturity metric provides a baseline for departments and agencies to report and be evaluated at various maturity levels and EPA is in complete support of this implementation.

Focus on Workforce

EPA continues to make great progress in recruiting, developing, and maintaining an IT workforce that supports the agency's mission requirements and a rapidly developing IT environment. EPA maintains a robust Cyber Workforce Plan with dozens of actions across multiple fiscal years to ensure a highly skilled and agile IT and cyber workforce. EPA has partnered with the Federal CIO Council Cybersecurity Reskilling Detail Program where employees received hands-on training in cybersecurity to build foundational skills in Cyber Defense Analysis. EPA has also partnered with U.S Digital Service (USDS) to deploy a Subject Matter Expert Qualification Assessment (SME-QA) for IT Specialists. The SME-QA process grants agencies an alternative to using the traditional resume review and self-assessment process and through the use of SMEs, provides the hiring manager the ability to confidently hire qualified talent. EPA will work to leverage direct hiring authority for IT Management specialists to enhance the hiring tools available to EPA IT managers.

I look forward to working with members of the committee on this important issue and will be happy to answer any questions you may have.