



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240



MAR 23 2006

The Honorable Thomas M. Davis III
Chairman, Government Reform Committee
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The Department of the Interior is concerned that this year's congressional Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA) report did not reflect the current status of its information technology security. Last year, the Department achieved its highest ranking (78) since the initiation of the FISMA grading system by former Congressman Horn. This year's rating from the Committee, despite further improvements to our IT security, is a 41. The Department has extensive details on numerous measurements pertaining to our security adequacy, including an independent review by outside experts.

We do not present our systems as impenetrable and understand we will always have to deal with risks. Indeed, risk management is the heart of what IT security is all about. Building from last year's score of 78, we note some accomplishments that strengthened our IT security and we believe should have been considered in our grade for 2005:

- Certified and accredited 98 percent of IT systems, with 100 percent quality assurance reviews;
- Trained 98.7 percent of the workforce in user security awareness;
- Ensured that 67 percent of IT security specialists completed role-based training;
- Increased the number of certified security professionals from 63 to 86;
- Survived 650 million probes and attacks, with only a couple of web defacements, through sophisticated vulnerability scanning and enhanced intrusion detection and prevention devices;
- Consolidated 13 networks into one with added security services;
- Reduced Internet Service Providers from 35 to 5, which created simpler and more effective perimeter security;
- Provided \$1.1 million to the Department's Inspector General for penetration testing in all bureaus;
- Developed eight enterprise software and hardware agreements for standardization, cost efficiencies, and increased security;
- Received the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB's) top ranking for the Department's enterprise architecture with an integrated security architecture;
- Submitted 60 IT investment proposals to OMB: each received passing IT security scores and OMB approval, and security was given special review in each case;
- Have fully qualified project managers on all major IT projects;

Highly renowned security experts
this report with the appropriate gu
Technology publications and Fede
challenging set of metrics. The fir
and includes not only a black and
associated with not meeting the m
deficiency. This assessment found
report and made many substantive
much clearer context. Our final a
divided into nine areas: four areas
unsatisfactory (contingency plann
maintain our C rating from last ye

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. Hord Tipton', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

W. Hord Tipton

Chief Information Officer

Certified Information System Security Professional
Information System Security Engineering Professional
Certification and Accreditation Professional