January 20, 2011

MEMORANDUM FOR: Simon Szykman
Chief Information Officer

FROM: Allen Crawley
Assistant Inspector General for Systems Acquisition
and IT Security

SUBJECT: Audit of the Department's Web Application Security

As part of our planned work for fiscal year 2011, we are initiating a security control audit of the Department of Commerce's Web-based applications. Our objective is to determine whether those applications are properly secured to minimize the risk of cyber attacks.

In recent years, the federal government—and the Department in particular—have been taking advantage of Web-based technologies to provide required services to the public, such as issuing fishing permits, providing meteorological data, and collecting patent application fees. If not adequately protected, these applications can be used as "gateways" to Commerce's back-end databases, which could contain sensitive information. Proper security measures are extremely important to protect data against unauthorized disclosure.

We plan to begin work immediately. We will contact your audit liaison to establish an entrance conference in order to discuss this audit. We will conduct field work at selected Department and contractor sites. If you have any questions, please call me at (202) 482-1855.

cc.:   Operating Unit Chief Information Officers
Susan Schultz Searcy, Audit Liaison, Office of the Chief Information Officer