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May 25, 2006

Ms. Karen S. Evans
Administrator of E-Government and Information Technology
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Ms. Evans:

Recently, your office made clear its support for the General Services Administration's (GSA) Networx telecommunications program. Further, you supported my efforts to move the Treasury Department toward Networx instead of its award of another stovepipe network environment.

Prior to the initial selection under the Treasury's Communications Enterprise (TCE) acquisition, I was briefed in detail by senior Treasury technology and acquisition executives. I was assured that TCE would stand as a model acquisition. As I suspected, the opposite was true. As you know, the selection decision was protested by several of the competitors and the protests were upheld by Government Accountability Office on multiple grounds.

To make matters worse for the Treasury Department, the Treasury Inspector General (IG) issued a scathing report on TCE. The report confirms all of my negative assumptions about TCE. According to the IG, Treasury did not have an adequate business case for moving forward with TCE and has performed no coherent cost analysis comparing TCE with GSA telecommunications vehicles. Finally, the IG concluded that it "is difficult – based on the extent and quality of the documentation provided – to understand why Treasury still intends to proceed with TCE," and recommended that Treasury consider the option of canceling the solicitation. Notwithstanding these difficulties Treasury has insisted on plowing forward with the acquisition yet another time.

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For nearly two years, I have been unwavering in my position on TCE: notably, that this acquisition runs contrary to a vision that I and many in Congress share – that our government needs an efficient, well-managed communications environment. This has never been truer than in today's complex world where our Nation finds itself at war and government communications requirements stand as critical.

In contrast to Treasury, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), whose communications requirements intuitively seem even more complex than those of Treasury, publicly announced its intention to use Networx as its primary communications acquisition vehicle. I commend DHS for its vision and leadership.

Of course, diverse agency requirements must be met by Networx. I have spoken with GSA officials who assure me that a customer-centric governance for Networx stands as a primary objective of this acquisition. Such governance clearly lends itself to cooperative and collaborative development of standards for security, interoperability and greater efficiency – all of which are essential to a 21st century government technology infrastructure.

DHS stands as an example of agency willingness to step forward in an acquisition that can become a government-wide, critical technology infrastructure initiative. GSA's willingness to effectively center its program management on a customer-driven "board of directors" is in the interest of specific agencies and the broader government enterprise.

The Office of Electronic Government now needs to step forward and meet the vision against which the office was created. And, I am very aware of that vision as I was one of the authors of the law which created the Office of Electronic Government. Given the importance of a more efficient government-wide communications environment and given the failure of Treasury in this and other major technology acquisitions, I ask that your office intercede in this particular issue and in broader support for Networx overall.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Davis", is positioned above the printed name.

Tom Davis
Chairman