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MEMORANDUM FOR CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICERS

FROM: KAREN EVANS

RE: VISION

Since the announcement of my appointment to the Vice Chair position, many of you have asked me to articulate my goals for the council – my vision, if you will.

As I see it, the Federal CIO Council stands today at a crossroad. While information technology companies today are faced with major challenges and must work every day to find solutions that will enable them to stay alive, the application of information technology within the government is full of opportunities.

The President has identified e-government as one of his five management goals. Congress has recently passed significant e-government legislation and recently recognized the valuable role played by the CIO Council. Signs that the government as a whole has seen the importance of IT systems are all around.

The administration and Congress have empowered us to set the IT agenda for the nation. This past spring we met and discussed a plan for integration and improved service delivery. In doing so, we recognized a common vision of better services, at less cost to create a more efficient government.

Vision, however, is a tricky thing. Having the vision is only the first step. Seeing a better way of doing business is only useful if we also have the determination to make it happen, the resources to do it right, and support from those around us.

OMB fully supports the work of the Federal CIO Council and holds in high regard the leadership, advice and feedback provided by the Council. OMB does not make policy without input. The Council provides that input – suggesting policies, making recommendations and providing different approaches. It is then OMB's mission to weigh those suggestions against administration goals and refine the policy.

Once developed, those policies again fall to the Council, which directs their implementation. The Council determines the mechanics that will make things possible. Together we are teaming for results and working to drive IT management in government.

For instance, OMB has suggested the government look at IT investment from a corporate perspective and manage the government as divisions within a single enterprise.

It is our role to identify the best way to achieve this. Developing architecture and licensing agreements in that context enables us to take advantage of a simple fact - the federal government spends more money than any other entity on Information Technology. By leveraging our buying

power, the government has the opportunity to drive the technology vision for the world.

We must continue developing a governance process for architecture and allow that architecture to drive our investment decisions. We must look at the common transactions within and between government entities and develop standards for those transactions across the government. We will consider publishing a taxonomy for government so we use the same language to describe the same concepts and will develop standards for XML data definitions so the information we create can be shared and accessed easily regardless of its origins.

When OMB suggested corporate management of IT resources, many of us became nervous. It was then, and still is, a different way of looking at government IT investments. It is also, however, the right way to do things. Managing government IT spending as a single entity and encouraging an enterprise approach allows the government to take advantage of its buying power and provide better services for the citizens.

In order to do these things, however, we must have a workforce trained to carry out such projects. The Council should develop standards for IT workforce training. Large scale, enterprise projects require workers versed in project management. As the scale at which the government IT systems operate grows, so too grows the need for workers who can plan, execute and close projects with minimum risk. It is incumbent upon the Council to make training of this type available for the workforce.

In all these things, we see the Council's mission.

- Providing input to OMB for formulation of policy
- Guiding and shaping the implementation of OMB policy
- Developing transaction standards for government
- Developing a governance process for IT architecture
- Developing workforce training programs for IT project managers
- Developing taxonomy and XML data definitions that apply across government

With members of the council working together, identifying and sharing best practices, and the Council working with OMB, these tasks can be accomplished. More than that, they must be accomplished if government is to continue developing into a more efficient and secure IT enterprise.

I appreciate your expression of confidence in me as your Vice-Chair and I look forward to working with and learning from each of you.