

BOB FERGUSON
Governor



WILLIAM S. KEHOE
Director &
State Chief Information Officer

STATE OF WASHINGTON
WASHINGTON TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS

1500 Jefferson Street SE • Olympia, Washington 98504-1501

August 29, 2025

The Honorable Pat McCarthy
Washington State Auditor
P.O. Box 40021
Olympia, WA 98504-0021

Dear Auditor McCarthy:

On behalf of Washington Technology Solutions (WaTech) and the audited participants, thank you for the opportunity to review and respond to the State Auditor's Office (SAO) performance audit report, "Opportunities to Improve State Information Security, FY 2025."

WaTech and our partner agencies appreciate the SAO's continued leadership in identifying opportunities to strengthen the state's information security posture. Protecting Washington's critical information systems and the confidential data they hold is fundamental to public trust. We recognize and agree with the recommendations in this year's report. State agencies have already taken steps to remediate identified vulnerabilities and assess and mature their security needs and resources to meet evolving threats.

WaTech is driving key initiatives to boost cybersecurity across the state. These efforts include expanding enterprise-wide monitoring for real-time threat detection, strengthening incident response and training for state agencies, modernizing policies to align with national security standards, and collaborating with local governments while leveraging federal grants to build stronger collective defenses.

As the audit highlights, cybersecurity requires continuous attention. WaTech remains committed to working closely with the SAO, the Office of the Governor, the Office of Financial Management, and all state agencies to ensure ongoing improvements. Thank you again for your thoughtful report and partnership.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "William S. Kehoe".

William S. Kehoe
Director and State Chief Information Officer
Washington Technology Solutions

cc: Shane Esquibel, Chief Operations Officer, Office of the Governor
Franklin Plaistowe, Deputy Chief Operations Officer, Office of the Governor
Kenneth Martin, Policy Director, Office of the Governor
Debbie Driver, Legislative Director, Office of the Governor
Jesse Jones, Director, Results Washington, Office of the Governor
Tammy Firkins, Performance Audit Liaison, Results Washington, Office of the Governor
Ralph Johnson, State Chief Information Security Officer, Washington Technology Solutions
Scott Frank, Director of Performance Audit, Office of the Washington State Auditor

OFFICIAL RESPONSE TO THE PERFORMANCE AUDIT ON OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE STATE INFORMATION SECURITY, FY 2025

AUG. 29, 2025

This management response to the State Auditor's Office (SAO) performance audit report received August 12, 2025, is coordinated by the State's Chief Information Officer on behalf of the audited entities.

SAO PERFORMANCE AUDIT OBJECTIVES:

The SAO sought to answer this question:

1. Can selected agencies make their IT systems more secure, and better align their IT security practices with leading practices?
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SAO Recommendations to the selected state agencies: to protect agency IT systems and the information contained in them, we recommended the audited agencies:

1. Continue remediating vulnerabilities identified during the security testing, starting with those most significantly affecting them.
 2. Revise IT security policies, procedures and practices to align more closely with leading practices.
 3. Continue to identify and periodically assess the agency's IT security needs and resources, including personnel and technology, to mature and maintain sufficient security.
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STATE RESPONSE:

We agree with the opportunities to improve recommended by the SAO to help protect agency systems and data. We take our duty to continue improving state government security seriously and will continue to do so. We have already implemented improvements and will continue to remediate any remaining vulnerabilities. We will continue to periodically assess and improve IT security needs.

Washington Technology Solutions will continue using the SAO's findings and observations of this and previous audits to improve the state's security posture across all state organizations.

Action Steps and Time Frame

- Each audited entity will work with its appropriate governing bodies to address and prioritize vulnerabilities, improvements, and considerations suggested by the SAO during its' fiscal year 2025 performance audit.