From: Beers, Jason (WaTech)
To: Rose, Al (SAO)
Cc: McCarthy, Pat (SAO); Rooney, Keri (SAO); Sherrer, Angie (WaTech); Quimby, Mark (WaTech)
Subject: RE: apology
Date: Thursday, January 18, 2024 11:16:20 AM
Attachments: image001.png

Al,

I appreciate your email and want you to know that I appreciate your input and experience in these matters. In my roughly 10 years working with the records community, both in our on-prem environment and in O365, I have gained a good understanding of the importance of records management and discovery and the risk of either of these not being done correctly. I also realize that my understanding is limited when compared to individuals such as yourself who's responsibilities include the implementation and management of these business functions at your agency while mine is to implement the best available technical solutions to meet your business needs.

I would like to clarify my comments about WaTech's stance on communication/coordination with the AG's office as it seems it may have been unclear. WaTech has committed to make the AG's office aware of enterprise level issues that we believe merit their awareness; not all issues rise to that level. This communication should be considered secondary to each agency communicating the issue to their assigned AAG. To meet this commitment, we have added identified members of the AG's office to our Teams channel (eDiscovery and Records User Group), our bi-weekly meetings, and the email distribution list for the group (WaTech DL eRUG). This will allow them to hear of issues and participate in discussions in real time as they are identified and communicated to the community.

I am copying @Quimby, Mark (WaTech) and @Sherrer, Angie (WaTech) on this email to give them the opportunity to add to or correct the information above as they see fit.

Thank you again for your email; it truly is appreciated.

Jason Beers | **Enterprise Compliance Administrator**
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From: Rose, Al (SAO) <rosea@sao.wa.gov>
Sent: Thursday, January 18, 2024 7:41 AM
To: Beers, Jason (WaTech) <jason.beers@watech.wa.gov>
Cc: McCarthy, Pat (SAO) <mccarthyp@sao.wa.gov>; Rooney, Keri (SAO) <rooneyk@sao.wa.gov>
Subject: apology

Dear Mr Beers

As you know, I have been attending the Washington State Records and Information Managers' Forum (WaRIM) "The Forum" for over three years in my capacity as the Director of Legal Affairs at the Office of the Washington State Auditor (SAO). I have done this to better understand the softwares used and how they affect managing records and data. During this time, much of the discussion in the Forum has centered around Teams Chat and the Purview software.

The State Auditor is committed to open and transparent government. Effective records management and public records request management are key in keeping those commitments to Washington State Citizens.

SAO relies on your agency, Washington Technology Solutions (WaTech) for enterprise IT service, support, security and advice. This includes choosing, implementing, and maintaining IT systems and software. SAO depends on WaTech's service, judgement, skill, and knowledge in evaluating, selecting, implementing, and troubleshooting software and equipment. WaTech's responsibilities in these areas extend to all state agencies.

SAO has leaned into adopting Purview. This software is much more complicated to use than the previous software. SAO created an employee position in order to have an expert in the use of this software. SAO has spent money on outside training for four employees in order to better understand and use Purview. SAO has expended staff time to experiment with and test Purview to better learn its patterns, glitches, challenges, and anomalies in order to identify the areas of concern in the program.

Every two weeks, four SAO employees attend the WaRIM Forum; in an attempt to stay current with the software; to stay educated about the issues/concerns of other state agencies and WaTech; and to hear about fixes/workarounds that have been created. We attend the forum because SAO knows that when it comes to utilizing systems and software, all Washington State agencies are interconnected.

Forum records document the various challenges with the software that state agencies have discovered/encountered since at least July 2020. During that time, more issues have arisen than issues solved by the software designer. In the past, in the Forum, I have appreciated your frankness in expressing your thoughts on the vendor's responsiveness.

I know that you did not choose the Purview software. I know that you are not responsible for the bugs and glitches that have been discovered by various state agencies and by WaTech. That these anomalies affect the reliability of and usefulness of the software is not your fault. You are not responsible for the fact that, at times, the vendor has been less than responsive in providing solutions. I understand that you are not responsible for records management, litigation, and public records request responsibilities for the various state agencies. I also understand that many times you do not create the message, you just pass the message on to the group.

In past Forum meetings, I have suggested that WaTech contact its AAG as soon as possible after an issue arose; particularly issues regarding managing and producing records. I stressed

that some of these issues impact the entire state government because of the legal and financial consequences that could flow to the State of Washington.

In an August 2023 forum meeting, you announced that WaTech's AAG has been contacted. You then shared with the group that the AAG had said that WaTech was to contact the AAG quickly when issues arose. That was encouraging to hear. You then announced to the group that you (or WaTech) had no intention of "coordinating" these issues and that it was the responsibility of the various agency records managers to contact the individual AAG's to discuss the issues.

It was at this time I expressed an active disagreement and dissatisfaction with that statement; and I advocated for WaTech to me more proactive.

It was the wrong way to express my concerns, both in tone and in place. Whatever the frustrations or concerns; even though there was a need for a crucial conversation about your message; I chose the wrong place and used the wrong tone for delivering the message. My tone was wrong, and it interfered with the reception of my message. I was wrong and I am sorry.

Al Rose

Al Rose

Director of Legal Affairs, Office of the Washington State Auditor

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