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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

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June 7, 2018

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Moran and Ranking Member Shaheen:

As Congress continues its work on the fiscal year 2019 appropriations bills, I invite your attention to an important tool for identifying and eliminating waste and duplication across the government: the Government Accountability Office (GAO) report, *Additional Opportunities to Reduce Fragmentation, Overlap, and Duplication and Achieve Other Financial Benefits*, GAO-18-371SP, issued in April 2018.

Since 2011, this annual report has introduced more than 700 action items across 275 issue areas for Congress and executive branch agencies to reduce, eliminate, or better manage fragmentation, overlap, or duplication; achieve cost savings; and enhance revenue. Agencies and Congress have completely or partially addressed approximately 76 percent of these actions, which GAO estimates has produced approximately \$178 billion in savings and other financial benefits.

But more work remains. This year's report, which was the subject of a recent hearing of the Senate Committee on the Budget, identifies actions that have yet to be addressed – including new actions identified for the first time and those that are only partially addressed. GAO estimates that by fully implementing these open actions, tens of billions of dollars could be saved without adversely affecting services on which many Americans rely. There are a number of actions relevant to your subcommittee, which I have provided in the enclosure attached along with a copy of the full report.

By implementing the actions in GAO's report, Congress can improve government performance and stewardship of taxpayer dollars. This is a goal that I believe both parties share, and I ask for your careful consideration of these items as the fiscal year 2019 appropriations process moves forward.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter. If you have any questions, please contact me, or have your staff contact Alison McGuire on my Budget Committee staff at (202) 224-2887.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael B. Enzi". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Michael B. Enzi
Chairman

Enclosure

Recommendations of the Government Accountability Office on “Additional Opportunities to Reduce Fragmentation, Overlap, and Duplication and Achieve Other Financial Benefits”
GAO Report Number: GAO-18-371SP

Senate Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies

Open Recommendations to Congress:

- Congress should increase coordination between various levels of government and reduce duplication of effort, resources, and costs associated with collecting and maintaining accurate geospatial address data. (2013-11-14-C)
- Congress could require that the Department of Commerce pursue several options to improve collection of antidumping and countervailing duties, principally by moving from a retrospective assessment to a prospective assessment. (2011-81-01-C)
 - During the 114th Congress, House Bill 614 was introduced but did not pass out of committee. If enacted, this bill would have required the Department of Commerce to submit a report evaluating the merits and feasibility of converting to a prospective antidumping and countervailing duty system.
- Congress should consider requiring the Department of Commerce to further analyze whether the fee-based model under which the National Technical Information Service currently operates is appropriate. (2013-10-01-C)
 - As of December 2017, Congress has taken a number of actions that affect the NTIS fee-based model for disseminating technical information. Specifically, the Department of Commerce Appropriations Acts, 2015, 2016, and 2017 prohibited NTIS from charging customers for reports authored by legislative branch offices unless the agency tells the customer how an electronic copy of the report can be accessed or downloaded for free online. The acts further stated that, if a customer still requires such a report from NTIS, the agency should not charge more than what is needed to recover the cost of processing, reproducing, and delivering the document requested. These requirements would be continued under current House and Senate bills to make appropriations for the Department of Commerce (Commerce) in fiscal year 2018 (H.R. 3354 and S. 1662).

Open Recommendations to Executive Agencies:

- Bureau of Prisons (BOP) should conduct a cost-effectiveness analysis of potential solutions for collecting inmate health care utilization data, and take steps toward implementation of the most effective solution. (2018-22-01-E)
- BOP should implement its guidance to conduct “cost analyses” of BOP’s health care spending to better understand the available opportunities for controlling health care costs. (2018-22-02-E)

- BOP should evaluate the extent to which its initiatives achieve their cost control aim to determine the actual or likely effectiveness of its ongoing planned health care cost control initiatives. (2018-22-03-E)
- The Directors of the FBI and the National Institute of Justice should evaluate the feasibility of sharing certain information to allow for more efficient use of data on missing and unidentified persons contained in the National Crime Information Center's Missing Persons and Unidentified Persons files. (2017-12-01-E)
- The Administrator of NASA should direct the appropriate officials to use existing analyses of spending to reduce duplicative contracts; implement use policies and metrics to measure use of strategically sourced contracts; and develop guidance, goals, and metrics for the resulting savings. (2013-23-07-E)
- The Secretary of Commerce should direct the Economic Development Administration to work with the Small Business Administration and the National Institute of Standards and Technology to further identify any gaps in capital access that the Federal Loan Guarantee for Innovative Technologies in Manufacturing program could fill, and then develop marketing materials and conduct outreach to help target those gaps. (2016-04-01-E)
- The Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, working with the National Science and Technology Council's Subcommittee on Critical and Strategic Mineral Supply Chains and agency leadership, as appropriate, should agree on and clearly define the roles and responsibilities of member agencies and take steps to actively engage all relevant federal agencies in the Subcommittee's efforts. They should also develop joint strategies that articulate common outcomes and identify the efforts of other agencies, as well as develop a mechanism to monitor, evaluate, and periodically report on the progress of member agencies' efforts. (2017-06-01-E, 2017-06-02-E, 2017-06-03-E)
- To achieve additional reductions in universities' administrative workload and costs while maintaining accountability over grant funds, DOE, HHS, NASA, and NSF should coordinate with each other and with other agencies that fund research to identify additional areas where they can standardize requirements, and report on these efforts. (2017-15-01-E)
- The Director of the Department of Commerce Office of Security (Commerce), in coordination with the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Director, should take action to evaluate the effectiveness of the current security management structure, as well as coordinated risk management policies and procedures between Commerce and NIST. (2018-08-01-E, 2018-08-02-E)
- The leadership of the Committee on STEM Education should review performance assessments of federal STEM education programs and then take appropriate steps to enhance effectiveness of the portfolio, such as by sharing promising practices that agencies could use in designing or revising their programs and reporting information on programs' performance evaluation and populations typically underrepresented in STEM fields. (2018-13-01-E, 2018-13-02-E, 2018-13-03-E).

- The Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy should report the outcomes of STEM programs' performance assessments completed in the previous year in its annual report. (2018-13-04-E)
- The Departments of Commerce, Housing and Urban Development, and Agriculture, and the Small Business Administration need to collect accurate and complete data on certain economic development program outcomes and use the information to assess each program's effectiveness. (2011-09-02-E)
- Several agencies, including the Department of Commerce, should improve program evaluation and performance metrics; specifically they should conduct program evaluations and collect data on performance measures; conduct more program evaluations to better understand why programs have not met performance goals and their overall effectiveness; consistently collect information that would enable them to track the specific type of assistance programs provide and the entrepreneurs they serve and use this information to help administer their programs. (2012-07-02-E)