Evaluation of the U.S. Department of the Interior’s Cybersecurity Practices for Protecting Critical Infrastructure – and

This is a revised version of the report prepared for public release.
Memorandum

To: Brenda Burman  
Commissioner, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

From: Jefferson Gilkeson  
Director, Information Technology Audits  
Office of Audits, Inspections, and Evaluations

Report No. 2017-ITA-023-A

We completed our work for the second part of our series to evaluate the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation’s (USBR’s) practices for protecting critical hydropower dams from emerging cyber threats. The second part of this evaluation was limited to the USBR’s [redacted] system. The [redacted] is an industrial control system that provides monitoring, alarming, and process control to ensure the safe and reliable operations of the water and power facilities for the [redacted], and [redacted]. We determined that additional efforts on this project are not needed. Further, the recommendations in our first report in this series – to improve the USBR’s account management and personnel security practices – apply to all of USBR’s hydropower dams.

Our technical analysis of data collected from the [redacted] found several conditions that helped reduce the [redacted] risk of compromise from external cyber threats. Specifically, the [redacted] was built on a private IP address space, which helps protect it from external cyber threats. Our review of network traffic did not identify any significant anomalies or indicators of compromise. We did not identify malware or other indicators of compromise during our analysis of memory from 12 key [redacted] computers. We also found that the USBR has implemented controls to help prevent the introduction of malware infections from external media such as USB devices. As such, we determined that additional efforts on this project are not warranted.

We appreciate the cooperation and assistance provided by your staff during our survey work. If you have any questions regarding this memorandum, please contact me at 703-487-5357.

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cc: Sylvia Burns, Chief Information Officer
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