

April 6, 2016

The Honorable Tom Wheeler  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission (FCC)  
445 12th Street SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Wheeler,

As you are aware, on May 9, 2014 President Obama signed into law the Digital Accountability and Transparency (DATA) Act of 2014 (Pub.L. 113-101), which I introduced in Congress. When fully implemented the DATA Act will create transparency for federal funds, set government-wide financial data standards, reduce recipient reporting requirements, and improve overall data quality. The efforts of individual federal agencies are essential to achieving the aims of the law, and I write to bring attention to those efforts at your agency.

The DATA Act presents both challenges and opportunities for federal agencies. Improving the quality and completeness of spending data, including by fully linking financial and account data, will enable agencies to improve internal management and to target resources for maximum impact. While data informs policy making and financial decision-making in government, as well as for external stakeholders, without consistent data standards these decisions are often made in the absence of some existing information. I also recognize the challenges that ongoing implementation of the law may present for agencies, including budget constraints, dependence on government-wide guidance from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the Department of the Treasury, and the complexity of incumbent systems and business processes. However, by prioritizing implementation of the law and fully leveraging its potential, I believe that the opportunities for your agency outweigh these challenges.

I appreciate your efforts thus far to implement the DATA Act and fully leverage this potential. To date, agencies should also be adhering to the steps outlined in the DATA Act Implementation Playbook issued by the Department of the Treasury, and to other guidance issued by Treasury and OMB. Leading agencies have issued individual implementation plans in line with OMB guidance, formed DATA Act teams, participated in government-wide deliberations on standards, developed an inventory of data, identified systems containing relevant data, and assessed needed policy and technical changes. Crucially, your agency should also have designated a DATA Act lead, a senior accountable official responsible for planning and implementing changes to systems and business processes, determining how best to map data elements from existing systems to the DATA Act Schema, and overseeing the testing and submission of data. By learning from best practices at leading agencies and providing adequate funding for implementation, your agency can leverage these requirements for better internal management and overall governance in the long term.

I remain strongly committed to robust oversight of DATA Act implementation and to ensuring that federal agencies are able to fully implement this crucial law. To that end, I would appreciate you sharing the following information with me:

1. What resources has your agency spent on implementation of the DATA Act to date? Does your agency have any existing contracts aimed at facilitating implementation?
2. Has your agency issued a DATA Act implementation plan in line with the DATA Act Playbook? If so, please share this plan with me.
3. How has implementation to date varied from your expectations, and what challenges have you encountered?
4. What resources does your agency anticipate needing in order to fully implement the DATA Act moving forward?

If I can be of assistance in addressing implementation challenges at your agency, please contact Caitlin Runyan on my staff at 202-224-2023 or [caitlin\\_runyan@warner.senate.gov](mailto:caitlin_runyan@warner.senate.gov). Thank you again for your efforts to prioritize the implementation of the DATA Act and to fully leveraging the potential of this exciting opportunity to transform federal spending and governance.

Sincerely,



Mark R. Warner  
United States Senator