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Tuesday, November 27, 2012

CONTACT: JONELLE TRIMMER

(202) 225-7163

Congresswoman Matsui Calls on GSA to Thoroughly Vet Cloud Broker Concept Prior to Adopting a Policy

Letter asks GSA to respond to clarifying questions; Seeks to ensure policy change is fully considered prior to adoption

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congresswoman Doris Matsui (CA-05), co-chair of the Congressional High Tech Caucus and its Cloud Task Force, sent a letter to the General Services Administration (GSA) requesting that GSA thoroughly consider all of the facts regarding its proposed cloud broker concept before making any decision to move forward. In a recent Request for Information (RFI), the Federal Acquisition Service asked whether GSA should encourage agencies not to purchase cloud services directly from providers, but instead work through a middle man companies known as “cloud brokers.”

While Congresswoman Matsui does not yet have a position on the merits of the cloud broker concept itself, she is requesting that GSA respond to clarifying questions about the RFI and the agency’s plans to ensure a policy change of this magnitude receives the attention it deserves.

A PDF copy of the signed letter is available [here](#) .

The full text of the letter is below:

The Honorable Dan Tangherlini
Acting Administrator
General Services Administration
One Constitution Square
1275 First Street, NE
Washington, DC 20417

Dear Mr. Tangherlini:

As co-chair of the Congressional High Tech Caucus and its Cloud Task Force, I am writing regarding the General Service Administration's (GSA) role in federal government utilization of cloud computing services, including the recent Request for Information (RFI) on the "cloud broker" concept.

It is my understanding that GSA is considering a substantial change in how such services would be procured by federal agencies. In the July 20 RFI, the Federal Acquisition Service (FAS) asked whether GSA should encourage agencies not to purchase such services directly from cloud services providers, but rather to work through middle man companies known as "cloud brokers" that would in turn purchase the various cloud services each agency might be seeking. While some stakeholders see the use of private sector cloud brokers as a benefit, others are concerned that adding an additional layer of private sector intermediaries could increase the cost of cloud services and replace a competitive bidding process with the unexamined preferences of these brokers.

I understand that GSA is eager to help federal agencies utilize cloud services in a way that is agile, rapidly scalable, cost efficient and secure. I support that goal. However, I also believe it makes sense to thoroughly consider all of facts regarding the cloud broker concept before making any decision to move forward. While I do not yet have a position on the merits of the cloud broker concept itself, I think a policy change of this magnitude merits substantial attention. As a start, please I would like the agency to respond to clarifying questions about the RFI and the agency's plans:

1. Has GSA already concluded that purchasing through private sector "cloud brokers" is the appropriate model for federal agencies, or is the cloud broker concept still an open question?

2. For agencies purchasing information technology services, isn't the "broker" role traditionally fulfilled by GSA itself? If cloud services are such a significant part of future IT needs, have you thought about potentially building the expertise in-house?

3. If agencies are expected to use private sector "cloud brokers," do you believe the agency would maintain an open, competitive bidding process?

4. One of the main selling points for cloud services is saving taxpayer money. Would adding an additional layer of middle men have an impact of some portion of the cost savings sought by moving to the cloud?

Again, I do not yet have a position on the merits of a cloud broker concept. It is my hope that you will provide a timely response to my questions so my colleagues and I will have a better understanding of your actions moving forward. Thank you for your time and consideration.