



Office of the Chief
Records Officer for the
U.S. Government

Sent Via Email. No Hard Copy to Follow.

July 6, 2023

Beatriz Collazo
Department Records Officer
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Washington DC 20250-1150

Dear Beatriz Collazo,

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) received the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) report dated June 27, 2023, regarding the potential unauthorized disposition of agency records.

According to this report, a former USDA political appointee's government-issued mobile phone was likely wiped remotely of all content and potential records by the USDA Information Technology (IT) Office. While the appointee was on a White House detail, the mobile phone was inactive for 11 months and did not connect to the USDA network, which initiated USDA's cybersecurity protocol in case the device was lost or stolen.

USDA's IT Office worked with the former political employee to try to gain access to the device's Apple iCloud account to retrieve a backup of the phone's data. However, the backup could not be accessed because the USDA email address associated with the iCloud account had already been decommissioned. Consequently, the IT office is having internal discussions to engage with Apple to continue recovery efforts.

The report further outlines that USDA will need to address various IT-related issues to establish automated methods that can capture text and electronic messaging, as well as photographs, audio and video files not otherwise captured via USDA systems on government furnished mobile devices as a safeguard to prevent future losses.

Although NARA accepts the information provided in the report, this unauthorized disposition case will remain open until the USDA's IT Office completes its recovery

efforts and safeguards are established to ensure no further loss of agency records from government-issued mobile devices.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you wish to discuss further, please do not hesitate to contact me at Laurence.Brewer@nara.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Laurence V. Brewer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "L".

LAURENCE BREWER
Chief Records Officer
for the U.S. Government



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November 15, 2023

Beatriz Collazo
Department Records Officer
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Washington DC 20250-1150

Dear Beatriz Collazo,

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) acknowledges that since receiving the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) report dated June 27, 2023, regarding the potential unauthorized disposition of agency records due to a cybersecurity factory data reset of an government-issued mobile phone, USDA's Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) was unable to engage Apple in efforts to recover any lost information associated with the former USDA political appointee's government-issued mobile phone.

NARA understands that USDA's OCIO is currently investigating Information Technology (IT) solutions that USDA can procure and establish to safeguard against losses of this type. Furthermore, USDA's 2023 Records Management Training addresses recordkeeping requirements associated with Government Furnished Equipment (GFE) and emphasizes USDA personnel's responsibility to ensure all records and information on GFE are managed in alignment with USDA and federal records management regulations.

Based on the information provided, the reporting requirements of 36 CFR 1230.14(a) have been met and this matter is now closed. Thank you for your commitment to improving your records management practices.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Laurence M. Brewer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'L' and 'B'.

LAURENCE BREWER
Chief Records Officer
for the U.S. Government