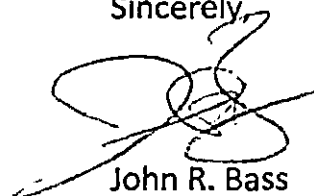Dear Ms. Shogan,

The Department of State is pleased to provide the Senior Agency Official for Records Management report for 2023.

The Department continued its progress in the transition to electronic record keeping. The Department also continues to make strides in enhancing its management of electronic records and reducing its paper holdings through its temporary records destruction program and achievements in the transfer of an unprecedented volume of permanent paper records to NARA in 2022, 2023, and into 2024. In partnership with NARA, the Department reduced its volume of permanent paper record holdings by transferring approximately 3,440 cubic feet of records. Additionally, the Department has been coordinating closely with the Federal Records Centers to store approximately 20,400 cubic feet of paper records that would have otherwise required digitization.

Despite the issuance of NARA's regulations on the digitization of permanent analog records for agencies to comply with the "Update to Transition to Electronic Records" (M-23-07), the Department will submit an exception request per Goal 1.2 of M-23-07 due to the intrinsic value of some of the Department's permanent paper records and the resource implications associated with mass digitization.

We look forward to our continued partnership with you and your staff. My point of contact for this effort is Deputy Assistant Secretary Eric F. Stein, and he can be reached at 202-485-2051 or SteinEF@state.gov.

Sincerely,

John R. Bass

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) requires Senior Agency Officials for Records Management (SAORM) to provide an annual report demonstrating how agencies are handling important records management initiatives as identified by NARA.

NARA uses the reports to determine the overall progress of the federal government in managing its records and the transition away from paper to digital formats, and to identify best practices and model solutions within federal agencies.

On June 28, 2019, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and NARA issued a memorandum, *Transition to Electronic Records* (M-19-21), to ensure that all federal records are created, retained, and managed in electronic formats. M-19-21 gave agencies until the end of December 2022 to comply with several specific deadlines.

On December 23, 2022, OMB and NARA issued a new memorandum, *Update to Transition to Electronic Records* (M-23-07) reinforcing the goals in M-19-21 and extending the 2022 deadlines to June 30, 2024.

Additionally, on January 1, 2021, Congress enacted the Preservation of Electronic Messages and Other Records Act, amending 44 U.S.C. Chapter 29, that requires the electronic capture, management, and preservation of such electronic records in accordance with the records disposition requirements of 44 U.S.C. Chapter 33.

This year's SAORM report provides an opportunity for agencies to report on plans and progress towards electronic recordkeeping and preservation under these requirements, as well as other important records management initiatives.

The reporting period begins on January 8, 2024, and reports are due back to NARA no later than March 8, 2024.

NARA plans to post your 2023 SAORM report on the NARA website upon receipt. Please ensure that your agency's report is a publicly releasable version. This action is in the interest of transparency in government and to promote collaboration and communication among agencies. NARA intends to list any non-responding agencies in a summary report on our website.

Instructions for Reporting:

- This template covers records management program developments, including those related to the transition to electronic recordkeeping as required by M-19-21 and M-23-07.
- Please be brief and precise in your answers. Limit answers to each question to no more than 500 words.
- Please complete the questions/items below and send the report to rmselfassessment@nara.gov. Include the words "SAORM 2023 Annual Report - [Agency Name]" in the subject line of the email.
- If you are responsible for records management in multiple agencies, components, or bureaus, please determine how you will submit reports to NARA. While NARA prefers a comprehensive report, you may submit separate reports for each component.

NARA may follow up with agencies to obtain additional information and/or documentation related to responses provided in the template.

As in previous years, we will be validating selected questions and responses from agencies. Your agency may be selected at random to provide additional documentation and/or take part in interviews to discuss your records management program activities.

Provide the following information (required):

- Name of SAORM: John Bass

- Position title: Undersecretary for Management

1. **What agencies, bureaus, components, or offices are covered by this report and your position as SAORM, and which will be reporting separately?**

   Please provide a list and indicate any that are new or have been changed due to reorganization or other circumstances.

   Department of State

2. **Will your agency meet the goal to manage, preserve and transfer all permanent records in an electronic format with appropriate metadata by June 30, 2024? (M-19-21, 1.2 and M-23-07, 1.1 and 1.2)**

   ☐ Yes
   X No
   ☐ Not applicable, all records are in electronic format

   If 'No,' why not? (Please include if you will be submitting an exception request and/or details of specific challenges in meeting the goal.)

The Department's central archive, known as eRecords, continues ingesting and preserving all formats of permanent, born-digital objects pursuant to the National Archives and Records Administration's (NARA) bulletin 2015-04.

The Department achieved significant progress in transitioning to electronic record keeping by continuing its efforts to transfer 3,440 cubic feet of permanent records to NARA and 20,400 cubic feet to the Federal Records Centers to reduce the volume of paper requiring digitization

However, there still remains a large volume of permanent paper records located throughout agency space. The Department plans to submit a digitization exception request, pursuant to Goal 1.2, for certain types of records it does not plan to digitize by the June 30 deadline. Additionally, the Department continues to refine its internal digitization policy and processes to digitize permanent paper records as needed and on a smaller scale.

3. **Will your agency meet the goal to manage and preserve all <u>temporary</u> records in an electronic format by June 30, 2024? (M-19-21, 1.3 and M-23-07, 1.3)**

☐ Yes
X No
☐ Not applicable, all records are in electronic format

If 'No,' why not? (Please include if you will be submitting an exception request and/or details of specific challenges in meeting the goal.)

As reported in previous years, the Department continues to transition paper-based business processes to electronic and digital platforms, while simultaneously updating records disposition schedules to reflect these new processes and record keeping medium. As a matter of policy, the Department already electronically manages and preserves temporary records that are born digitally. The Department does not have the resources to mass digitize legacy, temporary analog records, especially records of short-term value where such an action would be extremely cost prohibitive. The Department's temporary paper holdings continue to decrease over time as temporary records meet their scheduled disposition date.

4. **Will your agency meet the requirements of M-19-21, 1.3 and M-23-07, 1.3 to close agency-operated records storage facilities by June 30, 2024? (Choose all that apply)**

☐ Yes
X No
☐ Not applicable, my agency does not have agency-operated records storage facilities

☐ Not applicable, all records are in electronic format

If 'No,' why not? (Please include if you will be submitting an exception request and/or details of specific challenges in meeting the goal.)

The Department's agency-operated records storage facility is a multi-purpose facility that provides integral records and information management services to the Department workforce including its research, declassification, and transparency programs. While the Department has no plans to close the facility, efforts to significantly reduce the amount of inactive permanent and temporary records stored at this facility are well underway. The Department is working with NARA to deliver 3,440 cubic feet of permanent paper records that have already approved by NARA for transfer. The Department will explore commercial storage should it become cost advantageous and operationally feasible to leverage such services.

5. **Will your agency meet the requirements of M-19-21, 1.3 and M-23-07, 1.3 and transfer inactive records to a NARA Federal Records Center (FRC) or commercial storage facilities by June 30, 2024? (Choose all that apply)**

    X Yes, we will transfer to the FRC
    ☐ Yes, we will transfer to commercial storage facilities
    ☐ No
    ☐ Not applicable, all records are in electronic format

    If 'No,' why not? (Please include if you will be submitting an exception request and/or details of specific challenges in meeting the goal.)

6. **Does your agency have a Data Management Strategy that includes records management principles? (***https://www.archives.gov/files/records-mgmt/resources/cdo-rm-assessment-report.pdf***)**

X Yes
☐ No

Please explain your response.

The Department's Data Management policy is codified in the Foreign Affairs Manual, 20 FAM 102.1, which includes the requirement to ensure data that consitutes a federal record is managed according the Department's Records Management policies. The Department released a Data Management Strategy in 2021 (https://www.state.gov/the-department-unveils-its-first-ever-enterprise-data-strategy/) which can be accessed directly at https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Reference-EDS-Accessible.pdf. There is also an intra-agency Enterprise Data and AI Council = that is chaired by the Chief AI andData Officer. This group, along with the Electronic Records Management Working Group (ERMWG), continue to coordinate on program, policy, and resourcing matters involving records management, data governance, information technology (IT), cyber security, privacy, data categorization, information sharing, and knowledge management.

7. **In your role as SAORM, do you meet with your Agency Records Officer(s) to discuss the agency records management program's goals?**

X Yes
☐ No
☐ Not applicable, my agency does not currently have a designated Agency Records Officer

Please explain your response. (If 'Yes,' please include how often, a description of topics, and outcomes of these meetings. If 'No,' please explain why not.)

Major records management compliance, communications, and implementation efforts require SAORM engagement and, as such, I am regularly kept informed or I am involved in those efforts utilizing the Department's chain of command. For example, I am regularly kept abreast of strategic records management efforts, and I monitor efforts to achieve the goals associated with records management mandates such as the Transition to Electronic Records (M-23-07). Additionally, in those instances requiring direct engagement, I am consulted by the Agency Records Officer or Bureau of Administration leadership on records management matters that have a major impact on the Department including overseas records management, the establishment of the Overseas Records Branch and other matters involving Federal Records Act compliance on emerging technology.

8. **Has your agency incorporated NARA's digitization standards into your Information Resource Management (IRM) Strategic Plan? (44 U.S.C. 3506(b)(2) and OMB Circular A-130)**

X Yes
☐ No
☐ Not applicable, my agency is not currently digitizing records

Please explain your response. (If 'Yes,' what steps have been taken? If 'No,' why not?)

The Department's Information Technology 2024-2026 Stratgic Plan recognizes that digitization is driving both opportunities and challenges for the Department's global diplomatic mission. The strategic plan recognizes the need to enable modernization. Specifics regarding digitization standards and other digitzation operational considerations are incorporated into guidance products isssued by the Records and Archives Management Division.

9. **Does your agency have a social media strategy that includes capturing and maintaining records in accordance with records management statutes and regulations?**

X Yes
☐ No

Please explain your response.

The Department has a dedicated social media strategy that requires Department personnel to capture and maintain records in compliance with relevant statutes, regulations, and the Department's records management policy. This policy is codified in the Department's Foreign Affairs Manual, 10 FAM 180, and states that all official accounts must be managed in accordance with the Department's approved records retention schedules.

10. **Is there specific policy or guidance you need from NARA to support the strategic direction of your records management program?**

X Yes
☐ No

Please explain your response and include any comments on existing, pending, and future topics.

The Department continues to await NARA's success criteria for meeting goals 1.1 and 1.2 of M-23-07. The Department also awaits updated guidance on the approval process for agencies requesting an exception to M-23-07.