



DEFENSE INFORMATION SYSTEMS AGENCY

P. O. BOX 549
FORT MEADE, MARYLAND 20755-0549

JUL 05 2017

The Honorable Ron Wyden
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-3703

Dear Senator Wyden:

On 26 May 2017, members of your staff met with DISA subject matter experts to discuss our ability to enable STARTTLS for mail.mil in order to secure unclassified email between the military and other organizations. Based on our discussions, I want to follow up with additional details to my 27 April letter to you and re-emphasize that DISA does use STARTTLS on a case-by-case basis where specific mission and business requirements establish the need for encrypted communications.

Email remains one of our largest threat vectors. DoD uses a variety of tools to inspect each email for malicious software, phishing attempts, and other exploits. DISA is currently implementing architectural changes, which will allow the use of STARTTLS on a default basis, while still enabling us to apply appropriate safeguards; however, the capacity and throughput of the aging equipment creates limitations in supporting STARTTLS as the default for all mail sessions. DISA is actively working an acquisition to upgrade the email gateways that will allow us to take advantage of evolving capabilities for email protection. The use of STARTTLS will be implemented as part of the migration to the new email gateway infrastructure. We are estimating that we will complete the acquisition and transition to the new infrastructure in July 2018.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sarah E. Zabel", is positioned above the typed name.

SARAH E. ZABEL
Major General, USAF
Vice Director