



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

***Sent Via Email. No Hard Copy to Follow.***

September 8, 2020

Mr. John Ellis  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Ave NW (MC 2822T)  
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Mr. Ellis:

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) received your notification letter, dated June 19, 2020, informing NARA of the inadvertent loss of Microsoft Office 365 email boxes/accounts of certain former Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) users.

NARA understands that an investigation into this issue identified that “the Office 365 mailboxes were lost between 2013 and 2018 due to human error that occurred during the routine deprovisioning of separated users’ network accounts. While most of the mailboxes belonged to former EPA contractors, grantees or volunteers (e.g. students), a smaller number of accounts belonged to former EPA employees. ...EPA has determined that a total of 747 mailboxes were inadvertently deleted. Most deleted mailboxes 512 (or 69%) belonged to non-EPA employees, including contractors, grantees, and volunteers, while 222 (or 30%), belonged to EPA employees. Thirteen accounts (1%) were designated as “other” or “unknown”.”

NARA approved EPA’s Capstone schedule in June 2017, and although EPA did not implement the Capstone approach until March 2019, EPA was still responsible for managing emails and email accounts according to the approved Capstone schedule. The Capstone approach requires agencies to manage all emails and accounts according to the Capstone schedule, based on the individual accounts designation of “Capstone Official” or “Non-Capstone Official”. Therefore, any of the EPA email accounts that were inadvertently deleted after June 2017 is considered an unauthorized disposition of agency records.

Based on the information provided in EPA's report, and in follow-up discussions with NARA staff, EPA has met the reporting requirements of 36 CFR 1230.14(a). NARA is satisfied with your investigation into the matter, and with the safeguards established to prevent further inadvertent loss of EPA email accounts and considers this matter closed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Laurence M. Brewer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a blue ink color.

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