



January 29, 2021

The Honorable Javier Valdez, Chair
The House Committee on State Government & Tribal Relations
306 John L. O'Brien Building
PO Box 40600
Olympia, Washington 98504

RE: HB 1274 - Concerning cloud computing solutions. Internet Association Supports.

Dear Chair Valdez and Members of the Committee:

Internet Association (IA) represents over 40 of the world's leading internet companies and supports policies that promote and enable internet innovation, including commercial cloud solutions. Our member companies are global leaders in the drive to develop lower cost, more secure, scalable, and innovative cloud services to customers in both the private and public sectors. Many of our members also employ a significant number of Washingtonians, with several proud to have their global headquarters in the state.

On behalf of our members, we are writing to urge you to support and pass [House Bill 1274](#), which will provide the state's Office of the Chief Information Officer ([OCIO](#)) with the authority necessary to give the state's information technology (IT) infrastructure modernization efforts a level of support that is particularly important if Washington is to capitalize on the technical talent the state has fostered.

IA members will be the first to champion the Evergreen State's technical talent. By passing HB 1274, the Washington state government will give their own employees the same tools and capabilities that their family, friends, and neighbors have contributed to or developed themselves - while also helping increase access to services for those who need them.

During the pandemic, it became clear the pressures legacy systems can have for staff using them to support the delivery of services to constituents that rely on them. Using Washington's access to technical talent, enterprise services can be tailored to be delivered in the most effective, impactful, and satisfactory way possible. By using commercial cloud services, those same services will also be delivered in an adaptable, flexible, and secure manner.

On that final point about security, one of the major benefits of the commercial cloud to public sector organizations is the ability to rely on the investments made by cloud service providers in offensive and defensive cybersecurity capabilities. The nation's three hyperscale cloud service providers are all IA members - and they are all close and trusted partners of the nation's cybersecurity professionals, both on the federal and state levels.

Currently, with state operated on-premise data centers, every resident using a government service and every employee relying on the state's IT infrastructure to deliver that service is locked-in and dependent on the budget and staff tasked to operate and manage it. With the ability to tap into the teams and funding that supports the advances made by commercial cloud solution providers, the state's most valuable and sensitive data will take advantage of the very same infrastructure used to protect corporate



trade secrets, intelligence collected on foreign nations, and perhaps most importantly of all, your family photos, videos, and other memories.

Through the use of automated threat detection and other tools that not only improve security and compliance, but the general development of tools and services, the state's workforce will take advantage of the augmented intelligence that comes from these emerging technologies. Whether using bots to automate low-value, rote, and manual tasks, or taking advantage of machine learning to find insights within billions of data points that no person could ever sift through on their own in a single lifetime, Washington state government employees will be empowered to do more with more.

Cost savings come from the efficiencies the human beings using these tools are able to achieve by focusing on the work they were hired to do rather than perform basic maintenance or create workarounds to deal with outdated technology. Additionally, with the state data center required to have enough hardware, software, and staff on hand at any one time to handle the maximum number of users, commercial cloud solutions will free the state from having to pay for underutilized and oftentimes completely unused resources, diverting the financial investment necessary to other valuable services.

IA appreciates the concerns raised about the timelines outlined in HB1274. We recognize those dates may seem aggressive. However, one of the benefits of migrating to the commercial cloud is some of the challenges you would have with building and maintaining your own physical infrastructure is not something you will have to deal with - the commercial cloud has done all that work.

In fact, so much of what the [OCIO's Strategic Plan](#) outlines will benefit from and will require cloud-based solutions. From providing tools that allow for staff to spend more time on complex problems through the use of automation and advanced data analytics, to offerings that will scale technically and financially based on actual demand from Washingtonians, and most importantly in today's remote-friendly world, provide an infrastructure that will improve the state's cybersecurity posture, passing HB 1274 will help ensure the state ends the concept of legacy IT.

IA believes Washington state is well poised to take advantage of the benefits of the commercial cloud without short changing customer service, quality or security.

We look forward to the opportunity to discuss details about how and why HB1274 will be so beneficial.

Most sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rose Feliciano'.

Rose Feliciano
Director, State Government Affairs, Northwest

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Omid Ghaffari-Tabrizi'.

Omid Ghaffari-Tabrizi,
Director, Cloud Policy

Cc: Member of the House Committee on State Government & Tribal Relations
The Honorable David Hackney