



DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
WASHINGTON, D.C.

SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY

July 31, 2014

Dear Colleagues,

President Obama and I share the goal of making our government more transparent and more accessible to the general public. Over the course of this Administration, we have made great progress on this front, but our work is far from over. One way we can continue to build upon existing efforts is through our compliance with the Plain Writing Act of 2010. The Plain Writing Act mandates that federal agencies communicate to the public in a clear, concise, and well-organized manner. While the Act's mandate only covers certain outward-facing documents, we should all work to incorporate its principles into our day-to-day writing, as clear communication leads to more efficient decision-making and better outcomes.

We all know that the issues we deal with at Treasury can be complex, but the overuse of technical jargon and acronyms does not convey greater understanding of an issue. We demonstrate our grasp of an issue most clearly when we are able to distill complicated subject matter into simple and straightforward language. It is important that we work every day to make sure that our writing—whether a quick email or detailed analysis—is understandable to an outside reader.

I urge each of you to take a few minutes this week to read about the Plain Writing Act on Treasury's Plain Writing website and to look for opportunities to improve your writing, particularly when it will be public-facing.

While the clarity of our writing may appear to be a minor detail at times, we must remain focused on fulfilling our responsibility to communicate clearly with the people we serve. Thank you for your work on this front—I look forward to the continued progress we will make as we take up this effort together.

Sincerely,

Jacob J. Lew