

Bill Lueders

From: Bill Lueders <blueders@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 5, 2016 3:57 PM
To: DOA Public Records Board Comments
Subject: "Transitory Records" and General Records Schedule for Administrative Records
Attachments: Letter to Public Records Board, Jan. 5, 2016 (1) 3.53.37 PM.pdf

Attached please find my comments regarding items on your Jan. 11 agenda. Thank you for allowing this input.

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Wisconsin Freedom of Information Council

DEVOTED TO PROTECTING WISCONSIN'S TRADITION OF OPEN GOVERNMENT

January 5, 2016

Wisconsin Public Records Board
Matt Blessing, Chair
PublicRecordsBoardComments@Wisconsin.gov

Re: "Transitory Records" and General Records Schedule for Administrative Records

Dear Mr. Blessing and members of the Public Records Board:

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written comments regarding agenda items 2, 5, and 6, relating to the Public Records Board's actions last August concerning the definition of "transitory records."

I will keep my comments brief, deferring to the much more detailed arguments presented in the letter you received from Christa Westerberg, the Council's co-vice president. Like her, I believe that any action that allows government officials to destroy public records is ill-advised and not within the legal purview of the Public Records Board.

It is my sincere belief that the board, in making this change, did not intend to give state public officials sweeping new power to destroy records of public interest. But that is how the change has been [applied](#), in at least two instances, generating statewide interest and concern.

Additionally, I think the Board should rethink the necessity or wisdom of allowing the destruction of communications regarding the confirmation or scheduling of meetings and of videos used for training purposes. As a reporter, I have often found that the back and forth on meetings is useful to understand process, including decisions to include or exclude participants. And there is presently a case that has been [appealed](#) to the state Supreme Court dealing with training videos, which two courts have ruled should be made public.

In my 25 years of involvement with the Wisconsin Freedom of Information Council, I have come to have great respect for the institutions of government and the actions of public officials. But I have also had occasion to see the fulfillment of the old adage, "Give 'em an inch and they'll take a mile."

Please do not give them that inch, especially now that you know doing so will lead to the destruction of records and the abuse of the public trust.

Sincerely,

Bill Lueders, President