



April 17, 2019

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** NESDIS Office Directors & Deputy Directors

**FROM:** Stephen M. Volz, Ph.D.  
Assistant Administrator for  
Satellite and Information Services

**SUBJECT:** Use of Commercial Cloud Services

One of the key outcomes from last year's IT Ground Summit was a collective interest across NESDIS to explore the potential of the Cloud to help address NESDIS' strategic objectives. Following the Summit we established an Integrated Project Team (IPT) with representatives from across NESDIS to draft a NESDIS Cloud Strategy, and to define a focused set of cloud pilots to validate if the commercial cloud is a viable tool for our future architecture and operations. The NESDIS Cloud Strategy and pilot projects were approved in the summer of 2018 and a Cloud Working Group is now tracking the execution of the cloud pilot projects.

I am pleased to report that there has been strong participation across NESDIS with the execution of the cloud pilot projects, and that there is an ever-growing interest to leverage commercial cloud services. Leveraging innovative technologies is a cornerstone of our future as we seek to increase the utilization of external data sources to improve weather forecasts, and to normalize our future cost structure.

The first set of cloud pilot projects are expected to start providing results in Q4 of FY19, it is imperative that we study and understand these pilot results before embarking on new initiatives. When we do step out with the next activities, we must do so well informed, with good cross-NESDIS coordination and with cross-NOAA communication. I consider the way NESDIS is pursuing the Cloud activities, including the conduct of the Cloud Working Group, to be a good example of how the integration layer evaluation and coordination should take place within the new NESDIS organization.

New ideas/thoughts/plans to leverage the commercial cloud across our enterprise are welcomed, and should be provided to the Cloud Working Group for evaluation and consideration on how they might fit into our overarching enterprise approach. However, no new cloud activity will be executed on any NESDIS system without my written approval. On-going, already approved cloud pilots (Secure Ingest Pilot, Operational Secure Ingest, CLASS COOP Proof of Concept, and IDPS) are permitted to continue executing as planned.

