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To whom it may concern:

At one time, industry analysts questioned whether any open source product could ever be successfully evaluated against the Common Criteria standard, the "seal of approval" for mission-critical software. Conventional wisdom held that open source software could not withstand such scrutiny because of the difficulty of establishing processes in an open source environment.

In late 2002, in order to accelerate the adoption of Linux as a secure, industrial-strength operating system, IBM embarked on a pioneering effort by sponsoring a Common Criteria evaluation of SuSE Linux 8 on IBM eServer xSeries. In order to be successful, we needed the participation of IT security consultants with extensive experience in information security standards, so we chose atsec information security as a consulting and evaluation partner. That landmark effort culminated in August 2003 with the first-ever security certification of Linux. Initial success was quickly followed by additional projects to certify other Linux products on all IBM eServer hardware platforms, to the point where today, Linux is rated at the same assurance level as any commercial operating system. This is a remarkable achievement, and atsec has been a valued partner every step of the way.

The initial successful Linux certification was a true pioneering effort, worthy of special notice in the industry as a test of the applicability of the Common Criteria standard to open source software. atsec consultants and IBM team members together have published and presented about the experience of evaluating and certifying open source software so that the collective industry understanding is enhanced.

I have been very impressed by the technical depth and professionalism of the atsec staff assigned to the Linux projects. Consultants brought many years of standards expertise and also a high level of technical knowledge about Linux systems that was essential to achieve success. atsec consultants have produced first-rate work on every project, and we continue to rely on atsec as our partner for ongoing Linux evaluation work. It has been an absolute pleasure to work with atsec, and I trust that we will have many opportunities to continue the collaboration in the future.

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