



INSTITUTE FOR 21ST CENTURY ENERGY

U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Karen Alderman Harbert
President and CEO

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January 11, 2012

Ms. Patricia A. Hoffman
Assistant Secretary
Office of Electricity Delivery & Energy Reliability
United States Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Assistant Secretary Hoffman:

I am writing today on behalf of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Institute for 21st Century Energy (the "Energy Institute") to express our support for the recently announced Electric Sector Cybersecurity Risk Management Maturity Project (the "Maturity Project"). The Energy Institute believes that the Maturity Project can play a key role in the development of a comprehensive public/private sector collaborative approach to ensure that U.S. electric energy resources remain available when called upon to power the economy. As such, the Energy Institute offers its full support to assist both the Department of Energy and the Department of Homeland Security as they pursue the recently announced goals of this initiative.

The Energy Institute is a longstanding supporter of the development, improvement and protection of the vital energy infrastructure that is the foundation for maintaining and growing a strong economy, promoting job development, and ensuring America's energy security. It is hard to think of any piece of our energy infrastructure that plays a more immediate and continuously important role in our economy and for our national security than America's electricity delivery infrastructure. Whether it be transmission lines connecting remote wind farms to population centers, or critical cross-river electricity delivery points that support the substantial energy demands of New York City or Washington, D.C., the economic and national security impacts of losing the functionality of such facilities, for even a limited period of time, is often incalculable.

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The unavailability of critical electric delivery infrastructure could have even more damaging impacts if a prolonged outage results from a successful cyber attack.

The Energy Institute applauds the Maturity Project's focus on the development and enhancement of partnerships between the public sector and private industry. In that vein, the Chamber has a National Security Task Force that focuses on cybersecurity policy. This group has helped to develop collaborative non-regulatory approaches to cyber issues with the Department of Energy and the Department of Homeland Security. Similar partnerships should ensure that all prudent and appropriate steps are taken to both harden our critical electric delivery infrastructure from third party intrusions, as well as to ensure that credible, actionable and relevant threat information is communicated to the owners and operators of electric delivery infrastructure on a timely basis upon the detection of an imminent cyber attack.

The Maturity Project's intention to develop "maturity models" should enable electric grid owners and operators to benchmark their current defenses and identify any potential gaps therein. This benchmarking exercise should ultimately lead to a more secure electric grid. The sharing of industry "best practices" is a proven method for assisting the owners and operators of the electric grid to develop workable and comprehensive reliability standards applicable today to numerous discrete aspects of electric system operation and maintenance. This method has a demonstrated track record of ensuring high levels of electric system reliability across our country, and should now have the opportunity to enhance the security and resilience of the electric delivery system from cyber attack.

While there have been various administration and legislative proposals to address the perceived gaps that exist with respect to the protection of our nation's critical infrastructure from cyber attack, it is commendable that the Maturity Project recognizes the complementary roles that public sector intelligence knowledge and private sector technical expertise can play in the development of a comprehensive and consistent approach to protecting our nation's electricity delivery system.

Both the public sector and private industry share the same goal with respect to the emerging cyber threat faced by our critical electric delivery infrastructure – to ensure that cyber threats never succeed in compromising the reliability of the electric grid.

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The Energy Institute stands ready and able to provide assistance to the advancement of this mutual goal. If the Energy Institute can be helpful in developing this public/private partnership to maintain the security of our critical infrastructure, please have your office contact Heath Knakmuhs at (202) 463-5874 or hknakmuhs@uschamber.com.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Harbert', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Karen A. Harbert
President and CEO
Institute for 21st Century Energy
U.S. Chamber of Commerce

cc: Under Secretary Rand Beers, National Protection & Programs Directorate
U.S. Department of Homeland Security