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Federal

White House Explores Cybersecurity Incentives

As part of the President's [Cybersecurity Executive Order](#), the Administration is exploring ways to offer incentives to operators of critical infrastructure to join a yet-to-be-determined voluntary cybersecurity framework. In a blog post on August 6th White House Cybersecurity Coordinator Michael Daniel said that the Administration is considering promoting a cyber-insurance market, providing grants, and limiting company liability from information sharing. That said, many of these incentives would require Congressional action in order to be fully implemented.

According to the blog post:

“Over the next few months, agencies will examine these options in detail to determine which ones to adopt and how, based substantially on input from critical infrastructure stakeholders. We believe that sharing the findings and our plans for continued work will promote transparency and sustain a public conversation about the recommendations. Publishing these agency reports is therefore an interim step and does not indicate the Administration’s final policy position on the recommended actions.”

You can read the full blog post [here](#).

Senate Efficiency Bill Scheduled for a Vote

The lone energy bill currently being considered by Congress, the Energy Savings and Industrial Competitiveness Act (S.1392), is scheduled for Senate consideration on September 10th.

S.1392 is intended to encourage energy efficiency and job growth by strengthening national model building codes, allowing federal agencies to take advantage of existing funding to use the most current building efficiency standards for new federal buildings and creating incentives for manufacturers to save energy by using more efficient electric motors and transformers.

Prior to leaving for the August recess, the bill's authors, Senators Shaheen (D-NH) and Portman (R-OH), agreed to several substantive changes to the base text. These are: (1) removing the commercial buildings efficiency financing program; (2) adding a new career skills program to provide grants to nonprofit partnerships in the Buildings Title; (3) adding an expanded class of motors eligible for the rebate program in the Industrial Efficiency Title and (4) striking the electric vehicle/natural gas section in the Federal Agency Title due to it triggering mandatory spending.

This comprehensive efficiency bill is now a magnet for controversial amendments, such as those related to Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations and the Keystone XL pipeline. These amendments will likely hinder the chances of the underlying bill passing. Senators Shaheen and Portman will continue to work with their colleagues over the August recess to limit these potential amendments. One amendment that industry groups have been working to include would replace a part of Section 433 of the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 which requires a significant reduction in fossil fuel-generated energy use in new and renovated federal buildings with strengthened existing federal energy efficiency provisions.

To read the most recent text of S.1392, go [here](#).

Sen. Markey Unveils Natural Gas Leaks Report

While serving in Congress prior to his recent election as the newest senator from Massachusetts, Ed Markey- requested a report on natural gas distribution pipeline leaks. The report entitled, "America Pays for Gas Leaks", was prepared by the Democratic staff of the House Natural Resources Committee and can be found [here](#).

The report was released August 1st and has garnered a good deal of coverage, particularly in New England. The document focuses on methane leaks in Massachusetts, the impact on the climate, and the potential cost to Massachusetts ratepayers via the Lost and Unaccounted For (LUAF) charge on their utility bills. Included in the report are suggested actions by utilities and their regulators to speed pipeline replacements and upgrades. Additionally, Senator Markey has indicated he will soon introduce legislation to amend the Public Utilities Regulatory Policy Act (PURPA) of 1978. The primary goal would be to allow faster recovery of costs for replacing infrastructure.

Amending PURPA would be a non-starter for the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC), which adopted a natural gas line investment resolution just prior to the release of the Markey report. The NARUC resolution can be found [here](#).

State

Environmental Protection Fund Turns 20

Governor Cuomo recently recognized the 20th anniversary of the State's Environmental Protection Fund (EPF). The EPF provides funding for open space, parks, solid waste and recycling, invasive species,

waterfront revitalization, zoos, and numerous other programs across the state. The 2013-2014 Budget increased EPF funding by \$19 million and specifically allocated \$4 million for flood and climate change mitigation projects.

“Twenty years ago, a vision to protect our State’s environmental heritage and resources became a reality with the creation of the Environmental Protection Fund, and today we continue to advance those important goals,” Governor Cuomo said. “Smart EPF investments in communities across the state are protecting New York’s air, land, water and natural resources, helping to expand recreation opportunities that attract tens of millions of visitors each year and promote economic development. As we reflect on what has been accomplished by the EPF, we also look forward to continuing New York’s proud environmental legacy.”

More information can be found [here](#) in the Governor’s press release.

Governor Cuomo Announces the Truck Voucher Incentive Program to Encourage Energy Efficient Transportation

Governor Cuomo has announced that \$19 million will be made available through the Truck Voucher Incentive Program to encourage the purchase of energy efficient vehicles. The program is broken down into two components – funding for battery-electric commercial trucks and New York City-specific funding for alternative fuel vehicles.

\$9 million is dedicated to battery-electric truck vouchers offered to counties around the state that did not meet federal clean air standards. The counties are primarily located in downstate New York, the Capital Region and in Western New York. \$10 million will be available for New York City initiatives including compressed natural gas vehicles, hybrid-electric vehicles, and retrofitting diesel engines with emission control devices.

The Truck Voucher Incentive Program is an extension of Governor Cuomo’s “Charge NY” Initiative which invests in electric vehicle (EV) deployment throughout the State. Originally announced in the 2013 State of the State address, Charge NY will invest \$50 million over the next five years to build EV charging stations across New York and stimulate greater overall demand for electric powered cars.

Additional information about the Truck Voucher Incentive Program can be found [here](#) in the Governor’s press release.

Governor Cuomo Directs State Agencies to Provide Support for Community Rebuilding Plans

The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) has been directed to prioritize and expedite New York Rising Community project applications for commercial/industrial energy efficiency projects that include resiliency measures to minimize damage from future storms. The New York Rising Community Reconstruction Program provides rebuilding and revitalization assistance to communities severely damaged by hurricanes Sandy and Irene and Tropical Storm Lee.

Under the program the New York Power Authority (NYPA) will give preference to New York Rising Communities for initiatives aimed at energy sustainability, including determining locations for public electric vehicle charging stations as part of the Charge NY program, supporting solar panel installations

under the NY-Sun initiative, and prioritizing of energy efficiency projects at public buildings as part of the Build Smart NY program.

The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) will work with New York Rising Community planners to determine which projects will require environmental permits and expedite these applications through the permitting process.

The Department of State will give preference to applications from New York Rising Communities which support the Brownfield Opportunity Areas Program; to assist those with significant brownfield contamination issues that are slowing the reconstruction and recovery process.

Additional information about the New York Rising Community Reconstruction Program can be found [here](#).

New Round of Funding for the Statewide Emergency Communications Grant Program

The Statewide Interoperability Communications Grant (SICG) Program will award an additional \$75 million in funding to help counties strengthen and improve their emergency communications systems. This is the third round of funding under SICG with \$122 million having been awarded since its inception.

SICG funding is provided to applications that pertain to response-level emergency communications across multiple jurisdictions and agencies, including State agencies, and must utilize non-proprietary, open standards-based technologies and equipment.

Additional information about the third round of funding can be found [here](#) in the Governor's press release.

Governor Appoints New Deputy Secretary for Public Safety

Governor Cuomo recently appointed Thomas Abt as the new Deputy Secretary for Public Safety. In that position, he will oversee the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (DHSES).

Abt most recently served as Chief of Staff to the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) at the U.S. Department of Justice. He previously worked as an associate at the law firm of Paul Weiss Rifkind Wharton & Garrison in New York, and as an Assistant District Attorney in the Manhattan District Attorney's Office.

Additional information about Abt can be found [here](#) in the Governor's press release.

New York State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli Releases NYPA Report

New York State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli issued a report on the New York State Power Authority (NYPA) which examines NYPA's finances, money transferred to support the state budget and expenses related to employee benefits and travel. DiNapoli's review of NYPA is one of a series of reports intended to make the activities of public authorities more transparent.

"The state regularly relies on NYPA for budget relief, which could pose future challenges for NYPA's ability to deliver low-cost power," DiNapoli said. "New Yorkers pay some of the highest electricity rates

in the country and need the rate relief that NYPA could provide if it appropriately focused its resources. This report also reviews executive and travel expenses incurred by NYPA.”

NYPA is the largest public power utility in the United States operating 16 generating facilities statewide and administering a low-cost power allocation program. This year’s state budget authorized a payment of \$90 million from NYPA to the state, continuing a long history of diverting NYPA funds to cover state expenses. According to the report, such payments – more than \$1.2 billion in the past decade – may have been a factor in NYPA’s recent request to increase transmission charges paid by customers statewide.

A copy of the report can be found [here](#).