



June 3, 2020

The Honorable Angus King
Co-Chair
Cyberspace Solarium Commission
2900 Crystal Drive
Suite 250
Arlington, VA 22202

The Honorable Michael J. Gallagher
Co-Chair
Cyberspace Solarium Commission
2900 Crystal Drive
Suite 250
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Sen. King and Rep. Gallagher:

On behalf of Protect Our Power, a non-partisan, non-profit organization focused on making the U.S. electric grid more secure and resilient, we want to commend the Cyberspace Solarium Commission (CSC) on the issuance of the white paper “Cybersecurity Lessons from the Pandemic.”

By adding insightful pandemic-related observations and recommendations to the ones provided in the CSC’s original March 2020 report, this new white paper further highlights the challenges of ensuring the resilience of our nation’s critical infrastructure, including the electric grid, and provides important guidance on what the United States needs to do to prepare for a major cyber disruption.

Our nation is under daily cyber assault from a range of entities, including those that would disable or destroy our electric grid in order to bring our economy and our country to a grinding halt. We have been repeatedly warned about these threats by every relevant government agency and, as the coronavirus demonstrated, an existential threat can engulf our entire nation with a speed and level of impact that we previously believed was impossible. As the white paper suggests, and Protect Our Power agrees, the CSC’s full set of recommendations “are now more urgent than ever.”

Specifically, enacting an Internet of Things Security law to enhance the security of the electric grid is of critical importance, as more than 50 billion devices will soon be interconnected, each

providing a potential pathway to the grid. This will become increasingly critical as more people work from home following the pandemic.

We also agree that responding to complex emergencies “requires a balance between agility and institutional resilience across each sector of the economy, focusing particularly on critical infrastructure,” especially, in our opinion, the electric grid, upon which all other elements of critical infrastructure depend to provide power.

Finally, as history and the pandemic have taught us, there is no substitute for planning and preparation, and prevention is far cheaper, and preestablished relationships far more effective, than a reactive strategy based solely on detection and response.

Again, Protect Our Power applauds the Commission and supports the recommendations contained in both the original report and this most recent white paper. Our team of former electric industry executives and experts is available to you as a resource to help ensure adoption and implementation of these critical initiatives.

It is not an exaggeration to suggest that the well-being of our nation and the full recovery of our economy from the coronavirus pandemic depend on swift and decisive action by Congress and relevant federal agencies. The CSC has provided a detailed roadmap for making our nation far more secure and resilient, and the time for action is now.

Sincerely,

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

Jim Cunningham
Executive Director
Protect Our Power