

Establishment of a National Risk Management Center

August 2, 2018

NPPD Colleagues,

At Tuesday's National Cybersecurity Summit in New York, Secretary Nielsen announced the establishment of a National Risk Management Center within NPPD. The Center establishes an organizational approach to integrate risk management activities, perform joint strategic planning, and most importantly, develop collaborative solutions to reduce risk to critical infrastructure.

Initially the Center will be comprised of OCIA, plus additional resources from IP and CS&C. I have asked Deputy Assistant Secretary Bob Kolasky to serve as Director of the National Risk Management Center. Bob is uniquely qualified to lead this significant undertaking and I am confident he is ready for the challenge. Bob will stand up a planning team and begin his transition to lead the Center. In order to ensure the Office of Infrastructure Protection remains with strong leadership, I have asked Steve Harris to serve as acting Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary alongside Scott Breor who will continue to serve as acting Deputy Assistant Secretary. Steve, along with the rest of the IP leadership team, will continue the work Bob has undertaken, including enhancing our physical security capability and continuing regionalization efforts.

Over the next few months, we will ask our government and private sector partners to join us in planning for the Center. Internally, we will evaluate activities that are ongoing at IP and CS&C, which may be better aligned to the mission of the National Risk Management Center. In the event an ongoing or new activity is identified, we will establish project teams coordinated within the Center so staff are able to work collaboratively to develop and execute risk management strategies.

Most importantly, we identified a clear need for tighter collaboration across industry and government, not just in cybersecurity efforts, but in generally understanding and addressing existing and emerging risks. So as we continue to integrate the watch and warning functions of the NCCIC and NICC, we must also enhance efforts to understand holistic risk conditions across our nation's infrastructure, whether cyber or physical – what's essential, what's a potential single point of failure, and what functions and services underpin our very society, government, and economy.

That higher order understanding of risk, criticality, and how to increase resilience has been at the heart of OCIA's mission since its inception. The establishment of the Center represents the elevation of that mission and the operationalization of the Secretary's authorities to lead and coordinate national critical infrastructure protection efforts alongside our government and industry partners.

In doing so, we may need to transcend the traditional sector definitions that have historically constrained and siloed information sharing. The significance of interdependencies is nothing new or unexpected, but how we organize and integrate with partners is. We at NPPD don't have all the answers, so we have to bring in industry and government partners to collaborate – to define what's critical, to create plans for how to increase resilience, and synchronize efforts across a range of partners in and out of government.

The NCCIC will continue to be our eyes and ears for cyber and the NICC for physical threats. The National Risk Management Center will be the engine for how we understand and the platform by which we'll collectively defend our infrastructure.

This is operationalizing risk management. This is NPPD continuing to move into the role Congress has defined for us and our stakeholders expect of us. As my predecessor said earlier this week, this is due to NPPD having established its bone fides. It has taken time, but let me be clear – it is the result of the hard work and dedication of the entire NPPD work force.

Now we move forward.

Christopher C. Krebs
Under Secretary

*NPPD leads the national effort to protect and enhance
the resilience of the nation's physical and cyber infrastructure.*