



Protect Our Power Seeks Federal Funding for States, Electric Utilities to Harden U.S. Electric Grid Against Cyberattacks

WASHINGTON, May 11, 2021 – Following the disabling cyberattack on a major U.S. pipeline, Protect Our Power today renewed its call for the Administration and Congress to make the security and resilience of the U.S. electric grid a top priority in pending infrastructure legislation.

“We’ve been warned repeatedly during the last several years by major U.S intelligence agencies that a crippling cyberattack on our critical infrastructure was not a question of if, but when,” said Jim Cunningham, executive director of grid advocacy group Protect Our Power. “The Colonial pipeline cyberattack, on the heels of the SolarWinds attack, makes it clear that our electric infrastructure is vulnerable and in need of significant security upgrades. The devastating weather-related power outages in Texas in February demonstrates the financial and social costs of losing power even for a short period of time.”

[Protect Our Power](#), the nation’s leading organization dedicated to making the electric grid more secure and resilient, has outlined a set of grid-oriented funding priorities for consideration as Congress prepares to take up a major infrastructure improvement package.

“The Administration has pledged to make further hardening our nation’s electric grid against cyberattacks a key part of comprehensive infrastructure legislation,” Cunningham said. “Timing is now more urgent than ever for the federal government, the utility industry, and the states to come together and provide a national solution to address this looming national problem.”

Protect Our Power proposes a comprehensive grid security funding plan focused on known, short-term vulnerabilities, as identified in work that has been conducted by the electric power industry, government regulatory and oversight agencies, and independent experts. Protect Our Power recommends that approximately \$22 billion be provided over five years to:

- Provide funding to municipal power companies and rural electric utilities to offset the cost impact on consumers that would be incurred by dramatically improving grid resilience programs in the near term. **\$12 billion**
- Build separate and more secure communications systems that control actual power system operations. **\$5 billion**
- Upgrade the quality and availability of financial and intellectual resources needed by government officials and state regulators to conduct the prudent oversight necessary to assure reliable electric power distribution systems. **\$3 billion**
- Provide funding for regional power grid operators to upgrade their systems to prevent, mitigate and recover from cyberattacks. **\$1 billion**
- Promote, facilitate and provide incentives for developing a “Made in America” power industry supply chain. **\$500 million**

Protect Our Power also suggests providing funding for programs such as testing centers to ensure the integrity of critical grid hardware and software components prior to installation, facilitate the rapid tech

transfer of government-developed cyber protection technologies to electric utilities for commercial implementation, and to establish a supply chain protocol and provide seed money to create a quasi-governmental oversight entity to ensure that the products and services used to build and maintain a reliable electric grid and related systems are not intentionally infected by foreign suppliers.

“We look forward to working with the Administration and Congress to craft an infrastructure bill that has electric grid resilience and security as a priority, and to having Congress pass a comprehensive measure that protects our nation’s electric grid from ever-increasing cyberattacks,” Cunningham said.

Protect Our Power is a non-partisan, non-profit group, staffed by industry experts and advised by an active panel of advisors with extensive national security, military, utility and regulatory experience. The organization is focused on improving electric grid security and has been working with all aspects of the electric power industry since 2016 to build consensus on what needs to be done and how to finance a plan for upgrading our electric grid. The group has worked with key stakeholders, including power companies and federal and state officials, to drive needed physical and regulatory improvements and advocate for a national policy to address this national threat.

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