American Water Works Association
Dedicated to the World's Most Important Resource™

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Cybersecurity and Water Utilities

Cybersecurity is a major concern for water utilities, just as it is for other critical infrastructure sectors in the U.S. We appreciate Congress' strong interest in this important issue, as evidenced by the variety of legislation introduced and hearings held in recent sessions.

Desirable features of cybersecurity legislation applicable to the water sector include:

- greater information sharing by federal agencies about cyber threats to the water sector, including imminent cyber threats, effective measures for protecting water systems from those threats, and methods of remediation from cyber attacks; and
- expansion of liability protections for water systems that voluntarily share or receive threat indicators and cybersecurity countermeasures.

The water sector's greatest cybersecurity need is information about emerging or imminent threats and what actions can be taken to mitigate the threat of a cyber attack. In the last session of Congress, S. 2588, the Cybersecurity Information Sharing Act of 2014 (CISA), by Sens. Dianne Feinstein and Saxby Chambliss, came closest to meeting these needs. We understand that Sens. Richard Burr and Feinstein are working on similar legislation for this Congress. We also understand that related bills are under development by the House Intelligence Committee, House Homeland Security Committee and Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

We recommend that Congress use S. 2588, the CISA bill from the last Congress, as the baseline for cybersecurity information sharing legislation. AWWA offers the expertise and experience of its members to assist in the development of such legislation.

In a proactive step of our own, AWWA has released free of charge to all water and wastewater utilities the AWWA Cybersecurity Guidance & Tool, a voluntary, water sector-specific approach that fully supports the NIST cybersecurity framework. It can be found at www.awwa.org/cybersecurity. This guidance provides water utility managers with a concise set of best practices and standards. It puts forth a transparent and repeatable process for evaluating the security of a utility's process control systems. The Cybersecurity Guidance & Tool are living documents, and it is expected that in the future, revisions and enhancements will be made with the input of government experts, users, and others. All of this reflects the certainty that cooperation and collaboration between federal officials and sector experts is both critical and effective in cybersecurity efforts.

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