

April 8, 2013

The Honorable Fred Upton
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Upton:

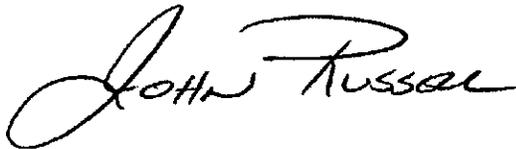
I am writing to urge your support of HR 624, the Cyber Intelligence Sharing and Protection Act of 2013. Consumers Energy endorses this legislation and appreciates the bipartisan leadership guiding this important bill through the legislative process. HR 624 removes the legal barriers currently preventing access to vital information that will help the electric and gas utility industry work with the federal government to more effectively identify and address cyber threats and vulnerabilities. The bill, while providing critical liability protection for actionable information, also protects this security-sensitive data from public disclosure and potential regulatory actions by the government. As you know, Michigan's economy is gradually improving from the nation's recent economic crisis. But our customers and communities still are struggling to regain a sense of stability and security.

The electric utility industry is the only Critical Infrastructure (CI) sector with mandatory and enforceable cyber security standards. Consumers Energy, the nation's fourth largest combination electric and natural gas utility, takes very seriously its duty to protect our electric and natural gas assets and our customers' private data. As such, our key priorities related to any federal cyber security policy include:

1. The promotion of successful public-private sector collaboration through information sharing by addressing key liability issues that could fundamentally inhibit open and actionable communication. In addition, we support legislation that would prohibit the federal government from using this voluntary information for punitive regulatory purposes.
2. A regulatory structure that streamlines regulations and eliminates duplicative or conflicting compliance mandates. In addition, this structure must cover all CI sectors. The utility industry is only as protected as the weakest CI sectors to which we are connected.
3. Upholding the stakeholder process set forth under the North American Reliability Corporation Critical Infrastructure Protection Program, which helps to ensure that any standards are technically and operationally sound.
4. Ensuring successful measures to improve cyber security by allowing sector-specific governing agencies the flexibility to set standards as needed. We are opposed to prescriptive "one-size-fits-all" mandates or policies that would standardize cyber security processes and/or divert resources from ongoing cyber protection activities to comply with potentially ineffective government mandates.

Again, the energy sector and Consumers Energy have long been committed to addressing cyber threats to ensure the reliability of the nation's electric grid and natural gas delivery systems. As new threats continue to evolve, the industry will continue to actively deploy various strategies to protect our assets and ensure the safe, reliable and affordable delivery of services. We believe that HR 624 is an important step to help all sectors mitigate cyber threats, and we strongly urge your support for passage.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John G. Russell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J" and "R".

John G. Russell
President & Chief Executive Officer