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April 12, 2018

The Honorable Fred Upton
Chairman, House Energy and
Commerce Committee Subcommittee
On Energy
2138 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Bobby Rush
Ranking Member, House Energy and
Commerce Committee Subcommittee
On Energy
2188 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: April 12 Subcommittee on Energy Hearing on the Fiscal Year 2019 Department of Energy Budget

Dear Subcommittee Chairman Upton, Ranking Member Rush, and members of the House Energy and Commerce Committee Subcommittee on Energy:

I am writing on behalf of the Utilities Technology Council (UTC) regarding the Subcommittee on Energy's April 12, 2018, hearing on the Fiscal Year 2019 Department of Energy (DOE) Budget. Established in 1948, UTC is the global association representing energy and water providers on their needs related to deployment of reliable and resilient Information and Communications Technology (ICT) systems. Electric, natural gas, and water providers use ICT networks as the backbone for the infrastructure that delivers safe, reliable, and secure energy and water services. These networks are essential for reliability, safety, resilience, and security.

UTC applauds the Subcommittee on Energy for holding this important hearing. With Secretary of Energy Rick Perry overseeing a modernization and reorganization of the Energy Department, this is a timely discussion. As the energy and water industry's voice on ICT networks, our members are particularly interested in the Energy Department's focus on cybersecurity. In February, Secretary Perry created the Office of Cybersecurity, Energy Security, and Emergency Response (CESER) in an effort to elevate the agency's analysis of energy infrastructure protection.

The Department of Energy also plays a key role in relation to the Electricity Subsector Coordinating Council (ESCC), a public-private partnership with the mission of coordinating efforts to prepare for national-level incidents or threats to critical infrastructure. UTC participates in ESCC discussions as an invited guest. Recent events, including last year's devastating hurricane season and the ongoing threat of cyberattacks on energy infrastructure, have demonstrated the importance of the ESCC and placed a particular spotlight on the need for resilient communications systems for utility service restoration, especially if the lights are out for an extended period.

Utilities build, maintain, and use their own communications systems (known as "private networks") for day-to-day reliability, grid modernization, and storm response. These networks were essential to bringing electricity back online in Texas and Florida and other areas hit during last year's hurricane season. As the energy and telecommunications industries converge, the ESCC has highlighted the need for cross-sector collaboration with the communications sector. Additionally, the ESCC has a working group focused on studying the communications needs of electric utilities should they have to operate the grid in a degraded



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state. They are also looking at technology that would be needed should communications be rendered inoperable by a “black sky” event.

As members of this Subcommittee focus on infrastructure issues, we encourage you to consider the need for federal dollars to be dedicated to researching and developing technologies that would ensure utilities have resilient communications systems to recover from black sky events. In addition, sector specific agencies, such as DOE and the Department of Homeland Security, as well as regulatory agencies including the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), should be encouraged to understand the cross-sector interdependencies that exist so solutions can be developed to address these interdependencies. Finally, the FCC should be required to consider the impact to grid resilience as it sets spectrum-allocation policies, such that the needs of critical infrastructure owners and operators are adequately weighted. We have also expressed these sentiments to members of the Subcommittee on Communications and Technology, which has oversight of the FCC.

UTC thanks the Subcommittee for holding this hearing. We appreciate the opportunity to submit this letter and look forward to working with all of you going forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joy Ditto', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Joy Ditto
President, CEO of the Utilities Technology Council

