

### Volume 297 July 31, 2012

Advocates of cyber security legislation have advanced the ball to the point where they might score. A new bill intended to win bipartisan support would offer "incentives" to companies that operate vital infrastructure if they participate with government authorities, which would include getting absolved of any liability.

The President has come out in favor of the new approach, writing an op-ed in the Wall Street Journal that essentially says that any hacker from anywhere in the world can disrupt critical U.S assets if certain companies have not taken the right steps to address such pitfalls. The time is now to fix the problem, he says, pointing out that water plants in Texas have already been hacked while cyber invaders have also penetrated natural gas pipelines in the United States.

"We need to make it easier for these companies -- with reasonable liability protection -- to share data and information with government when they're attacked," the president writes in the paper. "And we need to make it easier for government, if asked, to help these companies prevent and recover from attacks."

A recent report by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Control Systems Security Program says that the number of attacks has jumped from 41 in 2010 to 198 in 2011. Many problems, it adds, could have been prevented using best security practices -- things that may elude a private company but which could be resolved by sharing information. So-called spear phishing tactics where employees are tricked into giving out sensitive info to hackers is a prime problem.

About 85 percent of all critical infrastructure assets are owned and operated by private entities, which have an interest in keeping such attacks secret and which do not want to disclose any proprietary information. That's why the re-write of the cyber security bill would "hold harmless" these companies that collaborate with the federal government -- either to divulge attacks or to work with authorities to prevent them. Along those lines, owners of critical infrastructure assets would not be obligated to participate but if they do, they would have much flexibility. "These numbers demonstrate that attackers are increasingly turning their attention to critical infrastructure facilities, and are finding soft targets," says Brian Ahern, chief executive of Industrial Defender. "Doing nothing about this is like playing with fire, leaving power grids, chemical plants, oil and gas facilities, waters supplies and other key systems at significant risk."

### Electricity Pricing Areas - Jul 31, 2012 July

On-Peak	Per kWh
West Hub	\$0.04460
NI Hub	\$0.04370

### ComEd Average Day Ahead LMP Electric Price

Time Period	Average per Kwh
July, 2011	\$0.05170
Aug, 2011	\$0.04064
Sep, 2011	\$0.03058
Oct, 2011	\$0.02968
Nov, 2011	\$0.02816
Dec, 2011	\$0.02971
Jan, 2012	\$0.03043
Feb, 2012	\$0.02963
Mar, 2012	\$0.02894
April, 2012	\$0.02659
May, 2012	\$0.02816
June, 2012	\$0.03089
July 1 thru July 30	\$0.04303

### Extended Temperature Forecast: Chicago Area

	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
High	85	89	92	89	92
Low	69	70	74	76	77

