

**THE WHITE HOUSE**

**WASHINGTON**

**September 12, 2012**

Dear Mr. Chairman:

*Mr. Chairman*  
The executive branch national security team - including civilian, military, and intelligence professionals - agrees that inadequate cybersecurity within our critical infrastructure poses a grave threat to the United States and requires new and updated laws.

Following congressional inaction, the President is determined to use existing executive branch authorities to protect our nation against cyber threats. Specifically, we are exploring an Executive Order to direct executive branch departments and agencies to secure the nation's critical infrastructure by working with the private sector.

To that end, we appreciate your specific suggestions, and we agree that cybersecurity best practices should be developed in partnership between government and industry. For decades, industry and government have worked together to protect the physical security of critical assets that reside in private hands, from airports and seaports to national broadcast systems and nuclear power plants. There is no reason we cannot also cooperate to protect the cyber systems of critical infrastructure on which our economic well-being, national security, and daily lives depend.

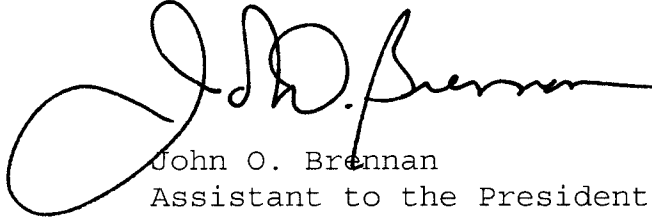
For the core critical infrastructure companies that are already meeting these recommended best practices, nothing more would be expected. The companies driving cybersecurity innovations in their current practices and planned initiatives should help shape best practices across critical infrastructure. Companies needing to upgrade their security would have the flexibility to decide how best to do so using the innovative products and services available in the marketplace.

I would note that executive branch actions under existing authorities cannot alter the reality that the United States Government will continue to be hamstrung by outdated and inadequate statutory authorities that the legislation would have addressed. Comprehensive legislation remains essential to

improve the cybersecurity of the nation's core critical infrastructure, to facilitate cyber information sharing between the government and the private sector, to strengthen and clarify the existing patchwork of authorities regarding Federal network security, and to protect the privacy and civil liberties of the American people.

Thank you again for your letter and your work to improve our nation's cybersecurity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John O. Brennan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the beginning and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

John O. Brennan  
Assistant to the President for  
Homeland Security and Counterterrorism

The Honorable Jay Rockefeller  
Chairman  
Committee on Commerce, Science, and  
Transportation  
United States Senate  
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