

Quarterly NGA Energy Security Brief – Spring 2021
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The Latest in Energy Assurance News

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a report concluding that utility distribution systems are “increasingly a risk” to cyber-attacks.

The GAO released a report on electric grid cybersecurity detailing (1) how and to what extent distribution systems are at risk from cyberattacks, (2) the potential impacts of such attacks, (3) steps states and industry can take to address security issues and (4) how well the Department of Energy has addressed these risks. While the report makes recommendations for the Department of Energy, states should really be the ones to read and address these issues. States bear the responsibility for securing distribution systems. States should be making plans to assess their risk and create a strategy to address gaps identified. Read the full report and a brief summary of the report below.

Full GAO Report: <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-21-81.pdf>

Utility Dive Summary Article: <https://www.utilitydive.com/news/utility-distribution-systems-increasingly-at-risk-for-cyberattacks-gao-r/598033/>

DOE releases **NEW State and Regional Energy Sector Risk Profiles**

Encompassing all 50 U.S. States and 10 FEMA Regions, the risk profiles examine the causes, frequency, impacts, and history of energy disruptions at a state and regional level. They present both natural and man-made hazards with the potential to disrupt electric, petroleum, and natural gas infrastructure. The [SLTT Program](#) team worked with the Argonne National Lab to update the data and streamline the profiles to help states make well-informed decisions about their resilience strategies, energy security policies and investments. In the past, state energy officials and emergency managers have utilized DOE’s risk profile data, charts and maps in their state Energy Assurance Plans, stakeholder presentations and tabletop exercises.

Access your states risk profile → <https://www.energy.gov/ceser/state-and-regional-energy-risk-profiles>

The Biden Administration kicked off a 100-Day plan to address cybersecurity risks to the U.S. electric system

On April 20, 2021, the Biden Administration kicked off a 100-Day plan to help improve U.S. electric grid cybersecurity. The effort is a collaboration between the Department of Energy, the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) and the electricity industry. The initiative will focus on identifying and deploying technologies that increase situational awareness in industrial control systems, increasing voluntary participation in DOE research programs that increase the visibility of threats, and improving the cybersecurity posture of IT systems. Along with the announcement of the initiative, DOE revoked the "[Prohibition Order Securing Critical Defense Facilities](#)" and issued an [RFI](#) to solicit comment from the industry to better inform future supply chain security initiatives.

DOE Press Release: <https://www.energy.gov/articles/biden-administration-takes-bold-action-protect-electricity-operations-increasing-cyber-0>

CyberScoop Article: <https://www.cyberscoop.com/biden-administration-energy-department-defense-cyberattacks/>

The Latest with NGA

***Out Now:* Addressing Cybersecurity for Critical Energy Infrastructure Through State Governing Bodies**

NGA has released a paper addressing practices Governors can follow to establish effective cybersecurity governance bodies that support critical infrastructure cybersecurity, with a focus on the energy sector. This paper reviews eight states that have made a concerted effort to address vulnerabilities facing the cybersecurity of the critical energy sector through a statewide governance body. These statewide governance bodies are tasked with developing recommendations for policymakers on a host of issues; identifying best practices; providing strategic direction on cybersecurity plans for state agencies; recommending training for state employees; and addressing cybersecurity workforce or professional development issues in the state. [Publication](#)

***Webinar Recording:* GridEx VI Webinar**

On Wednesday, March 31st NGA and the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) hosted a webinar on state participation in GridEx VI, the biennial energy security exercise hosted by the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC). Topics included background, exercise goals, participation, and in particular the roles for states and how state representatives can participate. Two

state speakers shared their experience from participating in prior GridEx exercises alongside NERC's exercise lead. [Webinar Recording](#)

State Energy Security and Resilience Highlights

Colorado created and released a dashboard and report to explore the future potential economic impacts of environmental hazards

Colorado's economy is being challenged by a variety of hazards – floods, draught, and wildfires. This project allows users to explore the potential impact of each of these hazards based on a variety of scenarios; severity of climate changes and population growth. The impacts are reported in terms of expected annual damages and are mapped on a per county basis. The tool also explores how different industries will be affected on a regional basis as well as mapping out potential damages for major economic drivers in the Colorado economy. Access the tool and full technical report below.

Future Avoided Cost Explorer: Colorado Hazards

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/4e653ffb2b654ebe95848c9ba8ff316e>

North Carolina

The North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality's Division of Coastal Management granted \$675,000 to twenty coastal counties for technical and financial assistance to support resilience effort development through the Resilient Coastal Communities Program. Program four phases include community engagement and risk and vulnerability assessment; planning, project selection and prioritization; project engineering and design; and implementation. The initial funds are to be used for the first two phases. After Hurricane Florence in 2018, Cooper signed Executive Order No. 80, calling for the development of the North Carolina Climate Risk Assessment and Resilience Plan. The 2020 Plan called for the development of the Resilient Communities Program, which was designed to boost resilience building at the local level with a three-pronged approach: local government funding, training and capacity building and an online resilience portal. Program page <https://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/coastal-management/coastal-adaptation-and-resiliency/nc-resilient-coastal>

South Carolina names their first Chief Resilience Officer

Governor Henry McMaster named Ben Duncan as South Carolina's first Chief Resilience Officer (CRO). As CRO, Duncan will lead the S.C. Office of Resilience which was created by [S.259](#) in 2020. Duncan will be responsible for overseeing grant programs that focus on recovering from severe weather events like hurricanes, managing federal funds available for disaster recovery, and developing, implementing, and maintaining the Statewide Resilience Plan.

<https://governor.sc.gov/news/2021-03/gov-henry-mcmaster-names-south-carolinas-first-chief-resilience-officer>

If you have comments, question, best practices to share with your peers, or would like us to feature your state, please contact Dan Lauf at dlauf@nga.org