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The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas, Deputy Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Deputy Secretary Mayorkas:

In a state where we face massive wildfires, damaging floods and catastrophic earthquakes, it's hard to imagine anyone other than Mother Nature who could pose a greater threat to our people and our economy. Yet, we have criminals, radical actors and hostile nation states lurking in our networks, exploiting the innocent and seeking to do harm and destruction.

Washington State has long been among the world's most technologically advanced regions and is therefore a target of these bad actors. I am, however, pleased we are coming together to face this growing threat to our citizens and way of life, and I strongly believe Washington is leading the way on addressing cybersecurity as a continually imminent and dangerous threat.

We have an entire economy, locally, regionally and nationally, that relies on computer networks. As President Obama pointed out at a cyber summit shortly after he was elected – computer networks deliver our oil and gas, our power and water – as well as public transportation and air traffic control.

Cyber threats are no longer limited to identity theft, bank hacks or the embarrassing leak of private emails. It's become an all-encompassing threat that has the ability to shut down our hospitals, breach our dams and prevent the delivery of important goods to our ports. It is a matter of public safety that extends far past the borders of IT and now requires a community effort to stay ahead of those wanting to do harm.

That's why I can't thank you enough for partnering with us today. It is discussions like these that ensure we uncover every shortfall and vulnerability and identify ways to address them. I hope this is the first of many collaborative discussions, as it will take the work of leaders at all levels of government and private industries and non-profits, as well as our tribal partners to secure our cyberspace.

As you will see and learn today, Washington State is doing everything it can to provide support and enhance our preparation. Our state's Chief Information Officer (CIO) is working tirelessly to provide secure and reliable network systems across our public service agencies. He's also providing technical outreach and assistance to our local jurisdictions.

Through the Emergency Management Division and our National Guard, my Homeland Security Advisor – in partnership with the CIO – has taken great strides in addressing our cyber emergency preparedness and response capability. However, we must continue to work with the private sector in defining the state's role in supporting companies, like Premera, when major cybersecurity incidents take place, and I know that discussions like these matter in relationship and trust building and ensuring the private sector is at the table.



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Our Department of Commerce is continually striving to ensure our state is a prime location for future IT and cybersecurity related public and private investments that meet this growing industry need. We know that through strong public-private partnerships, the state is and will continue to be seen as a leader in this space. Additionally, we are taking steps to build on private sector relationships with companies like Microsoft and Internet Identity to maximize the talented employees already working in this space but also to attract the best and brightest to Washington State when it comes to cybersecurity.

Through partnerships with institutions of higher education, like the University of Washington and Whatcom Community College, the state is focused on developing a workforce using strategies that will support existing employers, cultivate new ones and build a talent pool to tackle this challenging threat. And with partners like Snohomish PUD and Pacific Northwest National Laboratories at the table, our ability to coalesce the best and brightest is easier because they are all in our back yard.

The fact is, our political and military leaders have clearly articulated the impending threat of a large-scale cyber incident – one that will impact the services that we depend on for our way of life. Therefore, not just the IT managers, but the Emergency Managers and Business Continuity Planners from all sectors across the state must continue to engage with one another, share information, participate in discussions like this, and exercise our ability to work together and respond to significant cyber threats.

It is our duty to the citizens of this great state.

While the state is moving forward, we acknowledge that we can't do it alone. As I said earlier, enhancing our cyber security will require a community approach, or what we call in Washington State, "Community Cybersecurity."

Community Cybersecurity means:

- Regional collaboration between public, private and tribal partners;
- Strengthening our networks for public safety and commerce;
- Promoting research, analysis and sharing of cybersecurity information and best practices across private, public and tribal sectors;
- Unity of effort to enhance protection of critical infrastructure; and
- Dedication to the development of a workforce to strengthen our economy and enhance our cybersecurity posture.

As President Obama said, "the status quo is no longer acceptable – not when there's so much at stake. We can and must do better." I'm proud that we're doing that in Washington State. We're setting an example for the rest of the nation, and we're making our state one where people will choose to live and do business in cyberspace.

I look forward to the opportunity to further this conversation now and into the future and partner with the Department of Homeland Security to be a leading example of what states can accomplish when everyone has a seat at the table on this important topic.

Very truly yours,



Jay Inslee
Governor