

December 4, 2019

The Honorable Neil Chatterjee
Chairman
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street, NE
Washington, DC 20426

Dear Chairman Chatterjee,

We write today to get assurances from you that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) fully appreciates the threat posed to the nation's energy infrastructure by the use of equipment manufactured by Huawei Technologies Co., Ltd (Huawei). Creating a new cybersecurity division within your agency is a good start. We are hopeful that one of the new division's first objectives will be to defend this infrastructure against the threats posed by the use of equipment manufactured by Huawei Technologies Co., Ltd (Huawei).

As you know, the Intelligence Community has issued repeated warnings to regulators and political leaders about the dangers associated with using Huawei equipment on the nation's telecommunications network. Congress and the Trump Administration have taken steps to eliminate Huawei products from national security sensitive applications, citing concerns with the company's links to the Chinese Communist party, including its intelligence services. Given FERC's responsibility for overseeing the reliability of the electric grid, it is critical that your agency take steps to ensure that United States critical infrastructure and the electric grid remain protected from foreign intrusion.

While Huawei announced earlier this year that it intended to exit the U.S. solar market, there are no guarantees. Huawei's line of solar products relies on inverters – devices that manage and convert energy produced by solar panels – for use in homes and businesses. Huawei-produced inverters connected to the U.S. energy grid could leave it vulnerable to foreign surveillance and interference, and could potentially give Beijing access to meddle with portions of America's electricity supply.

The Administration will ultimately need to address the full scope of the threat posed by Huawei, including consideration of a ban on the company's entry into the U.S. inverter market. In the meantime, we urge FERC and its new cybersecurity division to work closely with the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Energy and its National Laboratories, industry, utilities, and other federal, state and local regulators to curb threats and protect critical infrastructure.

We offer our assistance, as it is imperative that Congress, the Administration and others in the private and public sector work closely together to protect our most vital assets from domestic and foreign threats.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

James E. Risch
United States Senator

Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator

Cc:
Commissioner Richard Glick
Commissioner Bernard L. McNamee