



Senator Thune introduces Cybersecurity Legislation

Missouri River Energy Services (MRES) recognizes Senator John Thune (R-SD) for his work on cybersecurity bill – S. 1353.

Senator Thune, the ranking member on the Senate Commerce Committee, along with Committee Chairman Jay Rockefeller (D-W. Va.) developed a bill that codifies key elements of a recent Executive Order on cybersecurity that establishes a framework for voluntary “best practices” that will leave in place the current system for developing cyber standards for the electric utility industry.

The Senate's new bill would formally add cybersecurity to NIST's statutory authority to ensure it continues to work with the industry on voluntary standards and best practices after the executive order expires. The bill also seeks to better educate Americans in cybersecurity, improve research in the field and start a public awareness campaign.

Senator Thune reached out to electric utilities in South Dakota, including MRES, for a better understanding on the regional impacts of this issue. The Senator invited Ray Wahle from the MRES staff to meet with him and his staff to discuss the issues in more depth.

MRES thanks Senator Thune for his leadership on this critical issue and is encouraged by bipartisan efforts in the Senate to craft legislation codifying the framework in the cybersecurity Executive Order, expanding federal research, and supporting key components of the current system. Over the past several years, Congress has considered a variety of proposals to impose a “top-down” system of cyber regulation that would be costly and unworkable. The efforts of Senator Thune and others represent a dramatic shift and are greatly appreciated by MRES and the rest of the utility community.