



Cybersecurity for Critical Infrastructure

Prepared by: Cybersecurity Advisory Council

Date: January 25, 2024



Executive Summary

The creation of the Cybersecurity Advisory Council and understanding of the cybersecurity posture of those entities that deliver essential services to Vermonters is of critical importance. Due to several unforeseen circumstances, work on this effort did not commence until December 2023. The council is now on track to produce a baseline understanding of the maturity of these organizations as it relates to cybersecurity preparedness.

The report that follows recaps the work to date and outlines the remaining effort for Fiscal Year 2024.

Enabling Legislation

Summary

No. 71 (H. 291). An act relating to the creation of the Cybersecurity Advisory Council

Subjects: Executive; information technology; Agency of Digital Services; cybersecurity; critical infrastructure

This act creates the Cybersecurity Advisory Council to advise on the State's cybersecurity infrastructure, best practices, communications protocols, standards, training, and safeguards.

Sec. 1 of this act establishes the Council and relevant definitions in 20 V.S.A. chapter 208. The Council is composed of 11 members and the Chief Information Officer serves as Chair. Among other responsibilities, the Council is required to develop a strategic plan for protecting the State's public sector and private sector information and systems from cybersecurity attacks, evaluate statewide cybersecurity readiness, and conduct an inventory and review of cybersecurity standards and protocols for critical sector infrastructures. The Council is authorized to enter into executive session for certain reasons that are in addition to the considerations listed in 1 V.S.A. § 313 and also has a public records act exemption regarding cybersecurity standards, protocols, and incident responses, if the disclosure would jeopardize public safety.

Sec. 2 of this act amends the definition of "critical infrastructure" in 11 V.S.A. § 1701.

Sec 3. of this act requires the Council to include in its annual report due on January 15, 2024 any recommendations on whether to amend the definition of "essential supply chain".

Sec. 4 of this act sunsets the Council on June 30, 2028.

Link to Act 71



<https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2024/Docs/ACTS/ACT071/ACT071%20As%20Enacted.pdf>

Membership

Membership for the Cybersecurity Advisory Council is identified in Act 71, in addition to those members a number of ADS staff are involved in supporting roles.

Cybersecurity Advisory Council Membership as of January 2, 2024

Member Name	Role	Member Organization
Denise Reilly-Hughes	CIO/Co-Chair	State of Vermont, Agency of Digital Services
David Kaiser	Acting CISO	State of Vermont, Agency of Digital Services
Erica Ferland	Director of Information Technology	Burlington Electric Department
Joe Duncan	General Manager	Champlain Water District
Nate Couture	Associate VP Information Security	UVM Health Network
Eric Hillmuth	IT Director	Vermont Gas
Eric Forand	Director VEM	State of Vermont, Department of Public Safety
Shawn Loan	Homeland Security Advisor Designee	State of Vermont, Department of Public Safety
Gregory C. Knight	Vermont Adjutant General	State of Vermont, Vermont National Guard
Justin Kolber	Assistant Attorney General	State of Vermont, Attorney General
Sue Fritz	IT Director	Vermont Information Technology Leaders
Michelle Anderson	Legal Counsel	State of Vermont, Agency of Digital Services
Shawn Nailor	Director/Co-Chair	State of Vermont, Agency of Digital Services

Activities Through January 25, 2024



Two significant events prevented the Agency of Digital Services (ADS) from initiating the council until December 12, 2023. The first event was the flooding of July 10, 2023, the response and recovery from this event required the full attention of ADS. The second event was the departure of a number of key staff. In December Shawn Nailor, former CIO, returned on a part-time basis to assist with this and other critical efforts. Since then a plan has been developed, the membership of the council is complete, the council has held its first meeting, this report has been completed, and the survey has been started.

Planned Activities Through June 30, 2024

Cybersecurity Advisory Council

The Cybersecurity Advisory Council will meet no less than three (3) times by June 30, 2024. The Council will address the following items during those meetings:

- Review legislative language for the definition of ‘Essential Supply Chain’;
- Review and approve this report;
- Develop and approve the Cybersecurity preparedness survey;
- Administer survey to identified organizations;
- Compile and review survey results;
- Develop Fiscal Year 2025 plan based on survey results.

Cybersecurity Survey of Critical Infrastructure and Essential Supply Chain

The survey will attempt to assess the cybersecurity posture for each of the entities providing essential services to Vermonters. Questions and analysis will be constrained to collecting information that gauges maturity without exposing vulnerabilities.

Essential Supply Language Review

Required in Statute

Sec. 3. REPORT

On or before January 15, 2024, the Cybersecurity Advisory Council shall include in its report required by 20 V.S.A. § 4662(g) recommendations on whether to amend the definition of “essential supply chain”, as defined in 20 V.S.A. § 4661, to include additional supply chains.

§ 4661. DEFINITIONS



As used in this chapter:

- (1) “Critical infrastructure” has the same meaning as in 11 V.S.A. § 1701.
- (2) “Cybersecurity” means the practice of deploying people, policies, processes, and technologies to protect organizations, their critical systems, and sensitive information from digital attacks.
- (3) “Essential supply chain” means supply chains for the production, in sufficient quantities, of the following articles:
 - (A) medical supplies, medicines, and personal protective equipment;
 - (B) articles essential to the operation, manufacture, supply, service, or maintenance of critical infrastructure;
 - (C) articles critical to infrastructure construction after a natural or manmade disaster;
 - (D) articles that are critical to the State’s food systems, including food supplies for individuals and households and livestock feed; and
 - (E) articles that are critical to the State’s thermal systems and fuels.

Council Review

The council does not recommend any changes to the definition of essential supply chain as defined in 20 V.S.A. § 4661.

