Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 7257, the SECURE Grid Act, sponsored by my colleague and Energy Subcommittee chairman from Ohio's Fifth Congressional District, Mr. LATTA.

State energy security plans are an important tool for States to consider the vulnerabilities in their energy systems. The interconnected nature of our energy system requires constant information sharing and cohesive planning to assess, identify, and address potential threats.

During this historic period of exponential demand growth caused by next-generation industries, we need to be even more vigilant against adversaries that seek to undermine U.S. competitiveness.

The SECURE Grid Act is a timely bill that would enhance a State's ability to manage the security of their energy systems. H.R. 7257 will improve visibility into an evolving threat landscape while ensuring that experts in the energy field can help provide critical insights into complex engineering operations.

As technology improvements have the potential to positively transform our economy, these tools can also be used and exploited by bad actors. This bill will ensure that States remain on the cutting edge of innovation and security.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1610

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 7257, the SECURE Grid Act, is a bipartisan bill that renews and enhances a State's ability to consider cyber and physical security protections to their energy systems, and it promotes collaboration between partners as they develop State energy security plans.

These State plans are a part of DOE's State Energy Program, which provides financial and technical assistance to help States with energy planning. It was reauthorized and updated in the bipartisan infrastructure law in 2021. As part of that reauthorization, plans must include energy emergency planning to secure the United States against physical and cyber threats.

The State energy security plans are an important tool that ensures States are prepared for the worst. The planning process brings together stakeholders and enables a level of coordination across Federal and State actors. This bill helps enhance the parts of those plans that guard against physical and cyber threats by ensuring that they encompass more of our energy system, local power lines, as well as facilities critical to ensuring the supply chain of energy infrastructure-related components.

Finally, the bill also bolsters a State's ability to obtain assistance from the Department of Energy, something I hope they will take advantage of as they regularly update their energy security plans.

This bill also ensures that the Government Accountability Office will review how DOE and the States execute these programs, to ensure that Congress has the best information possible the next time the provision needs to be renewed.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATTA), chairman of the Energy Subcommittee.

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Kentucky, the chair of the full committee, for recognizing me today.

I rise in support of H.R. 7257, the SECURE Grid Act, which I sponsored with the gentlewoman from California's Seventh Congressional District.

State energy security plans, or SESPs, provide States with an opportunity to identify threats and vulnerabilities in their respective energy networks. This collaborative process ensures that States can stay on the cutting edge of an evolving threat landscape.

While the initial exercise of SESPs has meaningfully assisted States in managing their energy systems, there is room for improvement to enhance visibility and threat detection and to holistically consider disparate vulnerabilities across the sector.

The SECURE Grid Act achieves this goal by ensuring States incorporate security and resilience of distribution networks. Distribution networks bring wholesale power directly to homes and businesses to keep the lights on and keep our businesses up and running. Any threat to the distribution system is a threat to our communities.

Importantly, the legislation also brings industry experts to the table during the development of SESPs to ensure State governments are equipped with the resources and operational understanding of the complex infrastructure.

In addition, the bill affirms the important leadership role of State governments to protect their energy systems while fostering collaborative partnerships with Federal counterparts.

Given the States' authority and understanding of their own unique energy needs, it is imperative that they are empowered to develop their own plans while working collaboratively with Federal partners.

This legislation comes at a timely moment in our Nation's history. Throughout the 119th Congress, the Energy Subcommittee of the House Energy and Commerce Committee has held several hearings with experts and administration officials to examine the state of our Nation's energy systems.

Each day, it becomes ever more apparent that our reliance on energy is growing because of AI advancements, reshoring of manufacturing facilities, and general economy-wide electrification.

Families across the country can be burdened by high energy costs, and we know that there is nothing more expensive than a blackout.

We also know that adversarial nations and nefarious actors are actively seeking out any vulnerability in our interconnected energy infrastructure to sow chaos and cause harm to everyday Americans.

To combat these efforts, the legislation requires proactive information sharing, constant vigilance, and clear visibility into the widening threat landscape. The SECURE Grid Act ensures that State energy offices and their respective Governors are able to put processes in place to detect, mitigate, and respond to potential attacks targeting critical infrastructure.

The everyday lives of families and businesses are wholly reliant on a secure, reliable, and affordable energy system.

Mr. Speaker, for the reasons stated, it is important that the House pass H.R. 7257, the SECURE Grid Act.

Again, I thank the gentlewoman from California's Seventh District for her help on this legislation.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I just want to say briefly that I think this is an important bill, and I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support it.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I agree that this is a very important bill. We have an interconnected grid, and we have to make sure that all States are ensuring that it is secure.

I appreciate my friend from Ohio for bringing this before his subcommittee and the full committee, and I appreciate his efforts.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote ''yes'' on H.R. 7257, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. MILLER of Illinois). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. GUTHRIE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 7257, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ENERGY EMERGENCY LEADERSHIP ACT

Mr. GUTHRIE. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7258) to amend the Department of Energy Organization Act with respect to functions assigned to Assistant Secretaries, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7258

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Energy Emergency Leadership Act''.

SEC. 2. FUNCTIONS ASSIGNED TO ASSISTANT SECRETARIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (a) of section 203 of the Department of Energy Organization Act (42 U.S.C. 7133(a)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(12) Energy emergency and energy security functions, including—

''(A) responsibilities with respect to energy infrastructure, security and resilience, emerging threats, cybersecurity, supply, and emergency planning and preparedness, coordination, response, and restoration, as appropriate; and

''(B) upon request of a State, local, or Tribal government or energy sector entity, and in coordination with other Federal agencies as appropriate, provision of technical assistance and support to protect against, detect, and respond to energy security threats, risks, and incidents.''.

(b) COORDINATION.—The Secretary of Energy shall ensure that the functions of the Secretary described in section 203(a)(12) of the Department of Energy Organization Act (as added by this Act) are performed in coordination with relevant Federal agencies.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. GUTHRIE) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CASTOR) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kentucky.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GUTHRIE. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material on H.R. 7258.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Kentucky?

There was no objection.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 7258, the Energy Emergency Leadership Act, sponsored by my colleague Ms. LEE of Florida.

The bill was considered and reported favorably by the committee on a unanimous, bipartisan vote because it will strengthen the Department of Energy's important energy emergency mission.

The bill requires that the well-established energy emergency and cybersecurity functions at DOE are organized under the leadership of an Assistant Secretary, which is important to maintaining a high level of leadership in DOE's emergency response and cybersecurity functions.

The Energy Emergency Leadership Act will ensure the Department has the focused and accountable leadership to more fully protect the public from all the hazards to the energy system, natural or man-made, including emerging threats from our foreign adversaries to the Nation's electric grid.

A vote for H.R. 7258 is a vote for ensuring strong leadership during energy emergencies for the benefit of public safety and welfare and for stronger cybersecurity protections in our electricity systems.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1620

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

It is becoming increasingly obvious that our energy system faces numerous threats, whether it is from skyrocketing demand, climate change, or cyberattacks, and it is undeniable that our systems need support to continue delivering reliable and affordable power for Americans.

H.R. 7258, the Energy Emergency Leadership Act, sponsored by Representative LEE of Florida and Representative LANDSMAN, is an important bill. It amends the Department of Energy Organization Act.

This bill elevates emergency response and cybersecurity responsibilities to the level of Assistant Secretary at DOE. It effectively ensures that the Director of DOE's Office of Cybersecurity, Energy Security, and Emergency Response, or CESER, goes through Senate confirmation.

As the grid becomes increasingly complex and faces a host of new challenges, it is critical that ensuring the security of the grid is managed by top officials. DOE already plays an important role in ensuring rapid response to an energy emergency. The subject matter and sector expertise concentrated at DOE is vital for ensuring that threats to the grid are handled quickly and appropriately.

H.R. 7258 clarifies in statute the emergency response responsibilities that are assigned to an Assistant Secretary. This ensures that there will be a consistent and effective leader and coordinator at DOE.

Finally, I also note that while this bill is focused on the leadership of DOE offices, the reality is the Department's ability to respond to threats depends on its capable career staff. The Trump administration has devastated the Department of Energy's professional staff across the board, and I don't want that to be lost in this discussion about how to enhance its response capabilities.

Nevertheless, I encourage everyone to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Madam Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. LEE), my good friend and the author of this legislation.

Ms. LEE of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 7258, the Energy Emergency Leadership Act. I thank Chairman GUTHRIE and Ranking Member CASTOR for their leadership in moving this bill through committee, and also my colleague Representative LANDSMAN for co-leading this bill with me.

This legislation passed out of the Subcommittee on Energy unanimously because both Republicans and Democrats on the Committee recognized how critical it is to have accountable leadership protecting our electric grid.

Today, the United States is experiencing record energy demand, driven by artificial intelligence, data centers, renewed domestic manufacturing, and widespread electrification across our economy. Meeting that demand safely requires not only robust and reliable generation but also a secure and resilient grid to deliver it.

At the same time, the threats to that grid have never been more serious. State-sponsored actors like Volt Typhoon are actively targeting American critical infrastructure. Physical attacks on grid infrastructure are also on the rise. For those of us from Florida, energy emergencies are not theoretical. They are a constant reality. After major hurricanes, a large number of Floridians lose power, and rapid Federal coordination becomes a serious matter of public safety.

H.R. 7258 addresses this directly. It ensures that the Department of Energy's emergency and cybersecurity responsibilities are led by a Senate-confirmed Assistant Secretary, a clear, accountable leader whose role is codified in statute, not left to chance.

This is a practical, bipartisan solution that will help our Federal response and our agencies keep pace with the reality of today's threats. This bill ensures that when an energy emergency strikes, a designated Federal official can cut through bureaucratic barriers, coordinate a clear response, and help keep the lights on for American families.

I appreciate the cooperation of Chairman GUTHRIE, Ranking Member CASTOR, and all of my colleagues in working together on this bill. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 7258.

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I thank the gentlewoman from Florida for working together. I really appreciate working together with both my friends from Florida, both from the Tampa area.

It is important to have the right leadership in the right place to make sure we protect ourselves at this vulnerable time.

I encourage my colleagues to vote ''yes'' on H.R. 7258, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. GUTHRIE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 7258.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RURAL AND MUNICIPAL UTILITY CYBERSECURITY ACT

Mr. GUTHRIE. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7266) to amend the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act to reauthorize the Rural and Municipal Utility Advanced Cybersecurity Grant and Technical Assistance Program, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7266

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Rural and Municipal Utility Cybersecurity Act''.

SEC. 2. RURAL AND MUNICIPAL UTILITY ADVANCED CYBERSECURITY GRANT AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

Section 40124 of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (42 U.S.C. 18723) is amended to read as follows:

''SEC. 40124. RURAL AND MUNICIPAL UTILITY ADVANCED CYBERSECURITY GRANT AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

''(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

''(1) ADVANCED CYBERSECURITY TECHNOLOGY.—The term 'advanced cybersecurity technology' means any technology, operational capability, or service, including computer hardware, software, or a related asset, that enhances the security posture of electric utilities through improvements in the ability to protect against, detect, respond to, or recover from a cybersecurity threat.

''(2) BULK-POWER SYSTEM.—The term 'bulk-power system' has the meaning given the term in section 215(a) of the Federal Power Act.

''(3) CYBERSECURITY THREAT.—The term 'cybersecurity threat' has the meaning given the term in section 2200 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002.

''(4) DEFENSE CRITICAL ELECTRIC INFRASTRUCTURE.—The term 'defense critical electric infrastructure' has the meaning given the term in section 215A(a) of the Federal Power Act.

''(5) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term 'eligible entity' means—

''(A) a rural electric cooperative;

''(B) an electric utility owned by a political subdivision of a State, such as a municipally owned electric utility;

''(C) an electric utility owned by any agency, authority, corporation, or instrumentality of 1 or more political subdivisions of a State;

''(D) a not-for-profit entity that is in a partnership with not fewer than 6 entities described in subparagraph (A), (B), or (C); and

''(E) an investor-owned electric utility that sells less than 4,000,000 megawatt hours of electricity per year.

''(6) PROGRAM.—The term 'Program' means the Rural and Municipal Utility Advanced Cybersecurity Grant and Technical Assistance Program established under subsection (b).

''(b) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall maintain a program, to be known as the Rural and Municipal Utility Advanced Cybersecurity Grant and Technical Assistance Program, to provide technical assistance and award funding, including grants, cooperative agreements, and prizes, to eligible entities to protect against, detect, respond to, and recover from cybersecurity threats.

''(c) OBJECTIVES.—The objectives of the Program shall be—

''(1) to deploy advanced cybersecurity technologies for electric utility systems; and

''(2) to increase the participation of eligible entities in cybersecurity threat information sharing programs.

''(d) AWARDS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out the Program, the Secretary—

''(A) shall, subject to the availability of appropriations, provide technical assistance, and award funding, including grants, cooperative agreements, and prizes, to eligible entities on a competitive or noncompetitive basis;

''(B) shall develop criteria for providing such technical assistance and awarding such funding;

''(C) may enter into agreements that can facilitate the objectives described in subsection (c) with eligible entities to provide technical assistance or award funding, including grants, cooperative agreements, and prizes; and

''(D) shall establish a process to ensure, to the extent practicable, that all eligible entities are informed about opportunities to receive technical assistance or funding, including grants, cooperative agreements, and prizes.

''(2) PRIORITY FOR FUNDING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—In providing technical assistance and awarding funding, including grants, cooperative agreements, and prizes, under the Program, the Secretary shall give priority to an eligible entity that, as determined by the Secretary—

''(A) has limited cybersecurity resources;

''(B) owns assets critical to the reliability of the bulk-power system; or

''(C) owns or operates defense critical electric infrastructure.

''(e) PROTECTION OF INFORMATION.—Information shared by or with the Federal Government or a State, Tribal, or local government under the Program shall be deemed voluntarily shared information and exempt from disclosure under section 552 of title 5, United States Code (commonly known as the Freedom of Information Act), or any provision of any State, Tribal, or local freedom of information law, open government law, open meetings law, open records law, sunshine law, or similar law requiring the disclosure of information or records.

''(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary to carry out this section $250,000,000 for the period of fiscal years 2027 through 2031.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. GUTHRIE) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CASTOR) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kentucky.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GUTHRIE. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks on the legislation and to include extraneous material on H.R. 7266.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Kentucky?

There was no objection.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of H.R. 7266, the Rural and Municipal Utility Cybersecurity Act, sponsored by Representative MARIANNETTE MILLER-MEEKS from Iowa's First Congressional District.

Throughout the 119th Congress, the Energy and Commerce Committee has held several hearings examining the state of our Nation's energy system and the persistent threats facing critical infrastructure. We heard directly from industry experts and administration officials about the ability of adversarial nations to exploit vulnerabilities in our energy infrastructure.

We know that rising energy demands and a growing reliance on intricate networks of energy delivery systems could widen attack surfaces and opportunities to cause harm and sow chaos in the daily lives of hardworking Americans.

These threats are uniquely concerning for rural communities and small utility operators that do not have the same resources as their investor-owned counterparts. These rural cooperatives and municipal utilities are economic drivers for small towns and remote areas of our country to ensure they can participate in the 21st century economy.

H.R. 7266 reauthorizes the Rural and Municipal Utility Advanced Cybersecurity Grant and Technical Assistance Program for 5 years to equip small utilities with the resources necessary to secure their systems and keep the lights on for their communities.

Importantly, the RMUC Act streamlines burdensome grant application practices at the Department of Energy to reduce unnecessary regulatory bureaucracy. By simplifying the funding process, we can get dollars from the agency into the hands of cybersecurity professionals in a way that meets the urgency needed to address our system needs.

In addition, this program will leverage the expertise of the Department of Energy by providing targeted technical assistance to cybersecurity operators to enhance threat visibility and implement security protections.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

H.R. 7266, the Rural and Municipal Utility Cybersecurity Act, sponsored by the gentlewoman from Virginia (Ms. MCCLELLAN) and the gentlewoman from Iowa (Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS), reauthorizes a critical program from the bipartisan infrastructure law. This initiative is designed to aid municipal utilities, rural electric cooperatives, and small investor-owned utilities.

The reason this is important is that the cyber threats to our Nation's power grid are growing every day, from sophisticated cyberattacks from nation-state actors to AI-enhanced cyberattacks from single criminals. The offensive capabilities of people who would attack our power grid are growing.