NATIONAL SECURITY TELECOMMUNICATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

March 24, 2006

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Northwest
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Your National Security Telecommunications Advisory Committee (NSTAC) has completed its examination of the current state of interdependencies between the telecommunications and electric power sectors, which have been highlighted by recent events including Hurricane Katrina. We have identified several near-term recommendations that require immediate action.

A variety of natural and man-made events, including the destructive 2005 hurricane season, the 2003 North American blackout, and the attacks on September 11, 2001, have clearly demonstrated the extensive interdependencies that exist between the telecommunications and electric power sectors. Moreover, these events have exposed the critical role the two sectors play in supporting the reliability and resiliency of other critical infrastructures.

This report is a result of the collaborative efforts of representatives and technical experts from NSTAC member companies, non-NSTAC companies, and Government agencies. The report offers several key recommendations for your consideration, including:

- Define and establish the term Emergency Responder within the *National Response Plan* and other appropriate plans, guidance, directives, and statutes, including other local, State and Federal government emergency plans.

- Ensure key response personnel of critical infrastructure owners and operators in the telecommunications and electric power sectors be designated as Emergency Responders.

- Include fuel supply, security, site access, and other required logistical support to critical telecommunications and electric power infrastructures as part of the Emergency Responder planning process to ensure priority restoration to critical telecommunications and electric power.

- Foster and promote effective emergency coordination structures to ensure reliable and robust communication between the two sectors and local, regional, State, and Federal governments.

The NSTAC is continuing its examination of interdependency issues focusing on the more technical aspects of emergency power; telecommunications resiliency related to power; and other areas where our recommendations will address maintaining communications operability and interoperability during an extended power outage. The NSTAC will be providing you a full report on these vital issues of concern later this year.

On behalf of the NSTAC Principals, I thank you for your ongoing support of the NSTAC and our activities. We look forward to working with you and your staff on these and other issues that have direct impact on national security and emergency preparedness.

Sincerely,

F. Duane Ackerman
Chair

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