##### August 10, 2015

**TO:** All Interested Parties

**FROM:** Caroline Trum, NAESB Deputy Director

**RE: Cybersecurity Activities Update**

**Update on Cybersecurity Activities –**

The WEQ Cybersecurity Subcommittee held its last meeting on July 13, 2015. During the meeting, the subcommittee discussed 2015 WEQ Annual Plan Item 4.c – Evaluate and modify standards as needed to support and/or complement the current version of the NERC Critical Infrastructure Protection Standards and any other activities of the FERC related to cybersecurity. While the subcommittee did not identify any industry activities that would warrant modifications to the NAESB Business Practice Standards, the participants did note several ongoing efforts that the subcommittee should monitor. Specifically discussed was the development of a report by the Electricity Subsector Coordinating Council (ESCC)[[1]](#footnote-1) which could contain recommendations regarding cybersecurity and information sharing. The ESCC was established by the Department of Energy to serve as a liaison between the federal government and the electric power sector to coordinate on threats to critical infrastructure and its members are comprised of industry leaders representative of all segments of the wholesale electric market. Additionally, the subcommittee discussed the forthcoming guidance from NERC regarding the Critical Infrastructure Protection Standards that could result in additional standards development and it was noted that the upcoming FERC Forms initiative within NAESB might result in a future need for additional cybersecurity standards.

This meeting served as a follow-up to the April 9 meeting where the subcommittee reviewed Version 5 of the NERC Critical Infrastructure Protection Standards and determined that no coordinating modifications were needed to the NAESB Business Practice Standards or to support 2015 WEQ Annual Plan Item 4.a.i – Review annually at a minimum, the accreditation requirements for Authorized Certification Authorities to determine if any changes are needed to meet market conditions. The subcommittee agreed to reconvene in September to perform a final assessment and vote on recommendations for the two annual plan items.

Additionally during the April 9 and May 14 meetings, the subcommittee also discussed an initiative by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Cybersecurity Center of Excellence to develop an Identity and Access Management Reference Architecture[[2]](#footnote-2) for energy participants, specifically those in the retail markets. As part of this effort, the work group is considering endorsing the NAESB ACA Certification Program as a method to achieve stronger authentication of individuals and systems. This certification program is supported by the ACA Process document, a specification document, and the WEQ-012 Public Key Infrastructure Business Practice Standards.

In discussions by the subcommittee, it was noted that WEQ-012 requires all end entities seeking certificates must register in the NAESB Electric Industry Registry (EIR) and the ACA must verify that entity’s registration before issuing a certificate. The issue was raised that this requirement could represent a barrier to entry for those entities seeking a certificate from an ACA but do not have a business purpose to require registration in the EIR. After discussion, the consensus of the subcommittee was that registration in the NAESB EIR is important for entities utilizing certificates for WEQ applications, such as the NAESB EIR and OASIS, but does not provide an added security benefit that should require all entities seeking certificates, regardless of purpose, to register in the NAESB EIR. As such, the subcommittee drafted a proposal suggesting modifications to the process document to allow NAESB ACAs to issue certificates to entities without having to verify registration in the NAESB EIR if the certificates are issued for use outside of NAESB WEQ-012 applications, such as OASIS and the NAESB EIR. The proposal was considered by the Board Certification Program Committee at their meeting on July 28, 2015. A subsequent meeting has been scheduled for August 24, 2015.

1. <http://www.electricitysubsector.org/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://nccoe.nist.gov/projects/use_cases/idam> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)