##### September 24, 2015

**TO:** All Interested Parties

**FROM:** Elizabeth Mallett, NAESB Deputy Director

**RE: WEQ Cybersecurity Subcommittee Update**

**Update on the WEQ Cybersecurity Subcommittee –**

During the April 29, 2015 joint WEQ Cybersecurity Subcommittee (CSS) and Coordinate Interchange Scheduling Subcommittee (CISS) conference call, the participants voted out a no action recommendation for 2015 WEQ Annual Plan Item 4.b (Review WEQ standards for impact of XML vulnerability exploits and make modifications as needed to standards and functional specifications). After that call, the CSS met again on May 14, 2015 in order to evaluate a new XML vulnerability and determined that it would be appropriate to move forward with the no action recommendation as new vulnerability did not impact the WEQ Business Practice Standards. Following a thirty day formal comment period, the WEQ Executive Committee adopted the no action recommendation for 2015 WEQ Annual Plan Item 4.b during its August 18, 2015 meeting.

The WEQ CSS will meet on October 14, 2015 to address 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) and 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). In regards to 2015 WEQ Annual Plan Item 4.a.i, the subcommittee met earlier this year and determined that no modifications were needed at that time but decided to postpone a recommendation until the October meeting when market conditions could be reevaluated. For 2015 WEQ Annual Plan Item 4.c, the subcommittee concluded during a previous meeting that no corresponding modifications were needed for NAESB WEQ Business Practice Standards to support Version 5 of the NERC Critical Infrastructure Protection (CIP) Standards. Additionally, the subcommittee did not identify any current FERC cybersecurity related activities that would require current action by the NAESB WEQ but did note several ongoing industry efforts that should be monitored. The WEQ CSS will consider no action recommendations for both annual plan items during the October 14 meeting.

An initiative by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Cybersecurity Center of Excellence seeks to develop an Identity and Access Management Reference Architecture for energy participants. As part of the effort, a NIST work group is considering endorsing the NAESB Certification Program for Accredited Certification Authorities (ACA) as a method to achieve stronger authentication of individuals and systems. Currently, entities seeking a certificate from a NAESB ACA must register in the NAESB Electric Industry Registry (EIR). The WEQ CSS determined that this requirement could be a barrier to entry for those participants that do not have a business purpose for which to register in the NAESB EIR. While important for entities utilizing certificates for WEQ applications, such as the NAESB EIR and OASIS, registration in the EIR does not provide an added security benefit to those entities wishing to utilize certificates for other applications. As part of these discussions, the Retail Markets Quadrant (RMQ) Executive Committee held a preliminary discussion during its August meeting regarding the potential development of Public Key Infrastructure Standards for the RMQ. The Board Certification Program Committee discussed the EIR registration requirement issue during its July 28, 2015, August 24, 2015, and September 14, 2015 meetings. As a result of these discussions, the Board Certification Program Committee has developed a proposal to modify the ACA process document to allow ACAs to issue certificates for non-WEQ purposes to entities that have not registered in the NAESB EIR. The Board Certification Program Committee has asked the CSS to review this proposal to determine if it will necessitate changes so the standards or specification document that support the certification program. The CSS will address this issue during its October 14, 2015 conference call.