

# Congress of the United States

## Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas  
Secretary of Homeland Security  
2707 Martin Luther King Jr Ave SE  
Washington, DC 20528

April 23, 2024

Dear Secretary Mayorkas:

We are writing about recent reports that a Russian government-affiliated cyber group launched a hack against a United States water facility. We request a briefing about the protections your department has already put in place, and any additional protections that your department needs to put in place, in order to protect our nation's water facilities and other critical infrastructure from adversary disruption.

Multiple reports, including by the Washington Post, detail the January 2024 hack in Muleshoe, Texas where the system that controls the city's water supply was manipulated. Within two hours, tens of thousands of gallons of water flowed out of the water tower. Earlier this week, the cybersecurity firm Mandiant attributed the hack to Sandworm, a hacking group believed to be connected to Russia's spy agency, the GRU. Sandworm is a known entity, having launched the NotPetya cyber-attack, as well as hacks on both the 2018 Olympics Opening Games in South Korea and multiple attacks on Ukraine's electrical grid. In fact, a group linked to Sandworm – the Cyber Army of Russia Reborn – claimed credit for the attack in Texas.

Water facilities continue to be central to our nation's critical infrastructure, and our water resources face many limitations. For example, as you may know, much of the American West is experiencing a historic, long-term drought that makes fortifying water supplies from vulnerabilities like adversary disruption efforts all the more important. Should a hack similar to the Texas incident occur in Arizona or other states that may lack sufficient water supply, it could disrupt operations across the region with devastating effects. Even as cities and towns work to use their water supply as efficiently as possible, water systems – especially those in smaller municipalities – may lack the infrastructure and funding to hold off large-scale cyber hacks.

Ensuring that our water systems and other critical infrastructure are protected from adversary disruption and can continue to provide clean water is vital to the economic prosperity of the United States. The loss of tens of thousands of gallons of water, like what happened in Muleshoe, could have devastating impacts on small, rural, and agricultural communities across the country.

In light of this reporting, we request that you answer the following questions in the briefing:

1. What action is your department currently taking to respond to this hack?
2. What are the short-, medium-, and long-term disruptions that resulted from this hack?
3. How are you coordinating with local officials and any relevant international allies and partners?

4. What additional steps are you taking to protect our nation's water facilities and other critical infrastructure from adversary disruption?
5. What additional authorities may you need to fully protect our nation's water infrastructure?
6. What lessons has your department learned from previous hacks, including an incident when an Iranian regime-linked cyber group executed a cyber-attack against a water authority in Pennsylvania last year?

Thank you for your attention to this important issue, and we look forward to learning more about the protections that are in place and any ways that Congress can further provide support.

Sincerely,



Ruben Gallego  
Member of Congress



Pat Fallon  
Member of Congress