



DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

[Docket No. DHS-2025-0580]

Establishment of the Alliance of National Councils for Homeland Operational Resilience - Critical Infrastructure (ANCHOR-CI)

AGENCY: Office of the Secretary, Department of Homeland Security.

ACTION: Notice of the establishment of the Alliance of National Councils for Homeland Operational Resilience - Critical Infrastructure.

SUMMARY: The Department of Homeland Security, through the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), is establishing the Alliance of National Councils for Homeland Operational Resilience - Critical Infrastructure (ANCHOR-CI). ANCHOR-CI is an advisory body made of critical infrastructure sector, cross-sector, regional, and industry councils that provide group advice and recommendations to the Secretary of Homeland Security, through the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) Director to ensure a coordinated national effort to foster a secure and resilient critical infrastructure and cyberspace, exchange best practices pertaining to technical assistance, and cooperatively maintain mechanisms for collaboration with Sector Risk Management Agencies (Sections 2202 and 2218 of the Homeland Security Act).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Michael Miron, Committee Management Officer, dhsfaca@hq.dhs.gov (202) 343-1673.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Secretary is establishing the advisory body pursuant to section 871(a) of the *Homeland Security Act of 2002*. In recognition of the sensitive nature of the subject matter involved regarding the assessment and mitigation of security and operational risks through whole-of-government coordination, and strong partnership with the private sector that is required to ensure the security and resilience of critical infrastructure, the Secretary hereby exempts ANCHOR-CI from The Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), 5 U.S.C. Ch. 10, in accordance with Section 871 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, Pub. L. 107-296, codified at 6 U.S.C. 451(a).

ANCHOR-CI is an advisory body comprised of sector, cross-sector, regional, and industry councils ("ANCHOR-CI Councils") that provide group advice and recommendations to the Secretary of Homeland Security through the CISA Director. ANCHOR-CI's advice and recommendations are to be specific, proactive, to the greatest degree possible, actionable, timely, strategic, and targeted to the Department's role in coordinating the national effort to secure critical infrastructure. ANCHOR-CI is located in CISA and CISA shall provide funding and the necessary administrative support to implement and manage ANCHOR-CI.

The duties of ANCHOR-CI are solely advisory in nature and shall extend only to the submission of advice, recommendations, and reports to the Department, through the CISA Director.

Membership: To conduct any and all activities under the ANCHOR-CI framework, the CISA Director must approve the

membership for all ANCHOR-CI Councils to include any member entities, individual participants representing member entities, and other subject matter experts, all of whom serve in ANCHOR-CI at the pleasure of the CISA Director. The CISA Director may appoint additional member entities, individual participants representing member entities, and other subject matter experts, as appropriate to best meet the needs of the federal government. ANCHOR-CI is composed of entities representing: (1) critical infrastructure owners and operators, including their representative trade associations or equivalent organizations; (2) governmental entities at the federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial levels; (3) organizations with direct responsibility for cybersecurity and critical infrastructure security and resilience activities and (4) other private sector entities as may be deemed appropriate by the CISA Director.

To fully leverage broad-ranging experience and education, ANCHOR-CI must include diverse representation to encompass the full spectrum of relevant expertise, including professional and technical expertise. ANCHOR-CI Councils must reflect a cross-section from across the owner/operator community, with regard to entity size, geographic location and any other factors that will produce a cross-section of perspectives, ensuring a more thorough understanding of the current and emerging threat and vulnerability landscapes with a particular focus upon entities of national significance or consequence.

ANCHOR-CI will provide forums through which cybersecurity,

law enforcement, intelligence, national security, and other government representatives at the federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial levels may engage representatives of private sector entities and critical infrastructure owners and operators in reviewing the current threat environment, discussing potential vulnerabilities, and forming recommendations on securing a more resilient critical infrastructure and cyberspace. This Notice is not a solicitation for membership.

ANCHOR-CI may consist of four types of Councils:

1. **Critical Infrastructure Sector Councils:** ANCHOR-CI includes critical infrastructure sectors designated by the President (informed by recommendations from the Secretary) pursuant to Section 9002 of the William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021, Pub. L. 116-283, codified at 6 U.S.C. § 652a. Each sector may establish Sector Coordinating Councils (SCCs) and Government Coordinating Councils (GCCs). Each respective SRMA will review proposed ANCHOR-CI Sector Council membership and recommend for approval to the CISA Director to ensure a representation of technical expertise and perspectives across the various disciplines of the sector. Sub-councils, properly recognized within a sector by the respective SRMA, will be considered part of that sector for ANCHOR-CI activities, and will work with the ANCHOR-CI Designated Federal Officer to ensure ANCHOR-CI compliance.

2. **Cross-Sector Councils:** ANCHOR-CI may include cross-sector councils to address current and emerging threats,

interdependencies, or other issues impacting multiple critical infrastructure sectors or industries.

3. **Critical Infrastructure Industry Councils:** Critical infrastructure industries can span multiple critical infrastructure sectors and may not fit cleanly within existing critical infrastructure sectors. These industries manage or control critical infrastructure systems and assets, as defined in 42 U.S.C. 5195c(e), and may have specialized risks requiring a forum to address shared challenges. Industries may recommend to the CISA Director the establishment of an Industry Coordinating Council to address gaps in the sector structure. The CISA Director will approve recommended participants and/or may appoint participants to serve on an Industry Coordinating Council.

4. **Regional Coordinating Councils:** Pursuant to Executive Order 14239, ANCHOR-CI will advance a partnership structure that recognizes that security and resilience is most effectively owned and managed at the State and local levels and is supported by an accessible and efficient Federal Government. At the discretion of the CISA Director, Regional Coordinating Councils may be established to ensure a more comprehensive and localized picture of the nation's critical infrastructure threat landscape. The CISA Director will approve recommended participants and/or may appoint participants to a Regional Coordinating Council. Regional Coordinating Councils will ensure access and representation by critical infrastructure entities in

rural areas, as defined in 49 U.S.C. 5302(17).

ANCHOR-CI member entities may serve for the duration of an ANCHOR-CI Term (two years). An entity's ANCHOR-CI membership is active for the duration of the ANCHOR-CI Charter, and while the entity remains in compliance with this charter, the ANCHOR-CI Bylaws, and any procedures or guidelines issued by the ANCHOR-CI Designated Federal Officer. In the event the ANCHOR-CI Charter terminates, all individual and entity appointments to ANCHOR-CI shall terminate. All memberships and appointments are extended along with an extension of the ANCHOR-CI Charter for another two years, unless otherwise specified by the CISA Director. Any member entities selected to lead an ANCHOR-CI Council may serve in that council leadership role for no more than two consecutive terms.

ANCHOR-CI Participants, individuals representing non-federal members of ANCHOR-CI, serve as representatives of their sectors or their organizations, not as special government employees as defined in 18 U.S.C. 202(a). ANCHOR-CI Participants serve without any compensation for their work and may be required to execute legally binding documents, such as gratuitous services agreements and non-disclosure agreements.

Subject matter experts (SMEs) may be approved to participate in ANCHOR-CI by the Secretary, in coordination with the CISA Director, to assist Councils or sub-councils on an ad hoc basis. These SMEs are not considered as ANCHOR-CI Participants. They will not engage or participate in any

deliberations or recommendations by ANCHOR-CI Councils or sub-councils. SMEs must complete a gratuitous services agreement and a non-disclosure agreement prior to participation in any ANCHOR activities.

All ANCHOR-CI participants will serve without compensation.

Working Groups and Sub-councils: At the request of the CISA Director, the Designated Federal Officer may establish working groups or sub-councils for any purpose consistent with the Charter.

Duration: ANCHOR-CI shall terminate two years after the date of establishment, unless the Secretary makes a written determination to extend ANCHOR-CI pursuant to their authority in 6 U.S.C. 451(b), for an additional period up to two years. The Secretary may make any number of subsequent extensions.

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Department of Homeland Security.

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