



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Griffo: President and Governor should convene summits to discuss, examine ability to respond to and prevent cyberattacks

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Following a recent ransomware attack that shutdown the Colonial Pipeline, state Sen. Joseph Griffo, R-I-C-Rome, is urging President Joseph Biden to convene a summit in Washington, D.C. with representatives from the private and public sectors and state governments to formulate effective strategies to ensure that what happened to the pipeline does not happen again.

The Colonial Pipeline supplies roughly 45 percent of fuel consumed on the Eastern Seaboard, carrying more than 100 million gallons of fuel per day between Texas and New York. The shutdown of the system since last Friday caused supply shortages, panic buying and increased prices at the pump.

“While I understand that the pipeline has resumed operations, this crippling and far-reaching attack has exposed real vulnerabilities and shortcomings in the delivery of important resources,” Sen. Griffo wrote in a letter to President Biden. “It is now incumbent upon all of us at the local, state and federal levels to ensure that we are capable of identifying potential threats and we are prepared in the event that a similar attack takes place so that we are not paralyzed in the manner in which we have seen recently.”

Sen. Griffo also is calling on Gov. Andrew Cuomo to assemble state agencies, private sector representatives and county leaders from across New York to assess the state’s preparedness level and ability to thwart online threats.

Sen. Griffo envisioned the potential for cybersecurity attacks several years ago when, as chair of the Senate's Banking Committee, he hosted six Senate committees at the Griffiss Institute in Rome to hear testimony from experts in law enforcement, finance and computer science about the state's preparedness for such acts. The joint-hearing was the largest in the history of the state Senate.

The Senator also continues to support legislation and initiatives that would help protect New Yorkers from malicious cyber activity.

"The alarming cyberattack on the Colonial Pipeline crippled a large part of our nation and is far-reaching," Sen. Griffo said. "These online threats are a real danger to our state's businesses, infrastructure and security and have hit local governments, hospitals and health systems, schools and other organizations. It is important that we plan properly, have open and effective communication across all spectrums that could potentially be targeted and ensure that redundancies and procedures are in place to react to cyberattacks and to hopefully prevent them from happening. It also is important that we have a diversified energy portfolio that includes hydroelectric, wind, solar, and zero-emission facilities such as nuclear. If the power goes out, people freeze. If there's no gasoline, it creates additional difficulties such as those we saw recently. We should never put all of our eggs in one basket when it comes to energy sources in New York."