
From: Joseph Petix
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Subject: Public Comment re: Cybersecurity

Public Comment for Carmel Area Wastewater District

Regular Council Meeting

June 24, 2021

My name is Joe Petix and I am a Technology Advisor at Alvarez Technology Group (ATG). ATG is a technology and cybersecurity firm based in Monterey County. We are currently a vendor of many special districts and cities in Monterey, Santa Cruz and San Benito counties.

My comments today are regarding the ongoing, persistent cybersecurity threat specifically targeted at local government organizations. The critical function of government and critical infrastructure is literally under attack. We are briefed regularly by the Northern California Regional Intelligence Center and there is evidence that these attacks are going to increase in pace and intensity to disrupt the core of the education system of the United States. This information is being provided by the FBI, the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency and The White House. If you would like further information regarding these reports, please let me know.

The time to act is now.

There is a national set of standards for proper cybersecurity practices maintained by the National Institute for Standards and Technology called the NIST Cybersecurity Framework.

One of the core principles is that cybersecurity is now a top-down effort that requires the Board to be primarily responsible for driving cybersecurity efforts. As members of the Board, you must be actively involved in making sure that your systems are protected, as best as reasonably possible to ensure that you are able to safely deliver services to your community.

There is an Executive Order issued by The White House, which requires critical infrastructure to comply with the national cybersecurity standards. We fully expect to see a continuation and expansion of these Executive Orders.

I urge the Board to take emergency action to begin the process of securing your computer systems and network infrastructure. The published guidance is that you should be engaging with a 3rd party, certified Managed Security Services firm as soon as possible.

Please feel free to contact me at Alvarez Technology Group for further information or reach out to your provider of choice. Again, I urge you to recognize the immediate threat against your ability to safely deliver services to your constituents.

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