

UTC 2019 Resolution: Acknowledging the Critical Relationship Between Canadian and U.S. Utilities

WHEREAS, electric utilities in Canada and the United States provide their customers with essential, life-saving services that power the global economy and our lives in general; and,

WHEREAS, Canadian and U.S. electric utilities own and operate infrastructure—power lines, power plants, and pipelines—which deliver these services throughout North America; and,

WHEREAS, utilities in Canada and the U.S. share ownership of different elements of their infrastructure at more than 35 cross-border transmission lines, with several new lines currently under development; and,

WHEREAS, overlaying this shared infrastructure is a system of telecommunication Information and Communications Technology (ICT) networks. These networks consist of wireless and wireline technologies which allow utility workers and industrial control systems to communicate, providing day-to-day reliability of energy and water infrastructure; and,

WHEREAS, energy and water providers use these networks to: support the secure and resilient delivery of utility services; restore service after storm; modernize their infrastructure; allow for intermittent generation resources to be added to the grid; and much more; and,

WHEREAS, the wireless components of these ICT networks rely on radio spectrum to communicate; and,

WHEREAS, over 80 TWh of electricity flowed across the U.S. and Canadian borders in 2017¹, with 30 U.S. states engaging in electricity trade with Canada each year; and,

WHEREAS, Canadian and U.S. utilities work together to secure their systems from cyber and physical attack, and are both subject to reliability standards developed by the North American Electric Reliability Corporation; and,

WHEREAS, NERC standards, particularly the Critical Infrastructure Protection (CIP) standards, are coordinated across the U.S. and Canadian border, demonstrating how closely interconnected U.S. and Canadian utilities are and the importance of grid security across North America, and

WHEREAS, U.S. and Canadian utility CEOs participate in the Electricity Subsector Coordinating Council (ESCC), providing effective and significant opportunities for

¹ State of the Electricity Industry 2019, Canadian Electricity Association https://electricity.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/AIO_Report_2019_Digital.pdf

utilities in both countries to collaborate and share best practices on utility security functions; and,

WHEREAS, utilities in both countries require access to interference-free spectrum to manage their critical infrastructure, modernize and harden their grids, and deploy cutting-edge distributed energy resources.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Utilities Technology Council, gathered at its Annual Telecom & Technology Conference in Fort Worth, Texas, acknowledges the critical relationship between U.S. and Canadian utilities to providing reliable electricity service to homes and businesses at and near the U.S.-Canadian border, and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that UTC will advocate on behalf of the telecommunications interests of utilities in the U.S. and Canada, particularly as it relates to grid resiliency and security needs, and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, harmonized, interference-free spectrum allocations would help fully integrate utility communications networks and create economies of scale across the U.S. and Canadian border.

Submitted to the Public Policy Division, May 2019
Amended by the Public Policy Division, June 2019
Approved by the Public Policy Division, June 2019