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Natural Gas Council Statement on GAO Report Assessing TSA Pipeline Cybersecurity Guidelines

Washington, D.C. – The Natural Gas Council (NGC), which represents the companies that account for nearly all aspects of the production, transportation, sales and delivery of the nation’s natural gas, issued the following statement regarding the Government Accountability Office’s (GAO) *CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION: Actions Needed to Address Significant Weaknesses in TSA’s Pipeline Security Program Management* report, which sought to assess the effectiveness of the Transportation Security Administration’s (TSA) guidelines for pipeline cybersecurity and their oversight of the program:

“We thank the GAO for its assessment of TSA’s oversight of pipeline cybersecurity. The study raises a number of important questions, which we are reviewing now. We take issue, however, with the conclusion that the TSA program has significant weaknesses. The current cybersecurity guidelines are performance-based, which allows the industry to stay ahead of emerging threats and gives companies the flexibility necessary to respond to a constantly changing landscape.

“The GAO report is a snapshot in time of TSA’s cybersecurity efforts. In the period since GAO’s research was conducted, TSA has made great strides to facilitate a fuller partnership among government, industry and regulators, including the recent Pipeline Cybersecurity Assessment Initiative that is a collaboration among TSA, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Cybersecurity Information Security Agency (CISA) and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). Additionally, the Oil and Natural Gas Sector Coordinating Council (ONG SCC) has announced a cross-sector working group to engage interdependent sectors that need to understand better how the industry prepares for and responds to security events. Our industry has long supported adequate resourcing for TSA and looks forward to working together in the future to see how these recommendations are implemented.

“Cybersecurity is an enterprise risk for our members, and, in many cases, they are already going above and beyond the current TSA guidelines to enhance the safety of their operating systems. The natural gas industry is committed to reliability, resiliency and security and will continue to work with TSA to help ensure the effectiveness of our efforts.”

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The Natural Gas Council was formed in 1992, uniting all sectors of the natural gas industry to work together toward common goals. The five full members of the Council -- the American Gas Association, the American Petroleum Institute, the Interstate Natural Gas Association of America, the Independent Petroleum Association of America and the Natural Gas Supply Association -- collectively represent nearly all the companies that produce, transport and distribute natural gas consumed in the United States. Leadership of the NGC rotates annually, with the Natural Gas Supply Association leading the Council in 2018. www.naturalgascouncil.org

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