

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 14, 2024

VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

Hans Vestberg
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
Verizon Communications Inc.

Dear Mr. Vestberg:

I am concerned about recent reporting stating that the China-backed hacking group, Salt Typhoon, gained access to Call Detail Records, which contains information on who, when and how often Americans talk to, as well as location data.¹ According to these reports, Verizon, Lumen, and AT&T were among several companies that were breached, which resulted in the collection of data from an unknown number of American citizens, including current and former government officials.² Additionally, the Wall Street Journal reported that, “[i]n Salt Typhoon, the actors linked to China burrowed into America’s broadband networks. In this type of intrusion, bad actors aim to establish a foothold within the infrastructure of cable and broadband providers that would allow them to access data stored by telecommunications companies or launch a damaging cyberattack.”³ Unfortunately, as of November 6, 2024, according to reporting, the public does not know the breadth and severity of this attack.⁴ Verizon must explain how this cyberattack happened and what is being done to ensure the security of data, as well the critical infrastructure it stewards.

I’ve previously raised concerns about the need to protect our nation’s cybersecurity and U.S. critical infrastructure from national security threats.⁵ On November 1, 2024, I wrote to the

¹ Sarah Krouse, Robert McMillan, and Dustin Volz, *China-Linked Hackers Breach U.S. Internet Providers in New ‘Salt Typhoon’ Cyberattack*, WALL STREET JOURNAL (Sep. 26, 2024), <https://www.wsj.com/politics/national-security/china-cyberattack-internet-providers-260bd835?mod=article>; see also John Sakellariadis, *Chinese hackers gained access to huge trove of Americans’ cell records*, POLITICO (Nov. 6, 2024), <https://www.politico.com/news/2024/11/06/chinese-hackers-american-cell-phones-00187873>.

² *Id.*; see Robert Legare, et al, *Trump, Vance, Harris campaign potential targets in broad China-backed hacking operation*, CBS NEWS (Oct. 25, 2024), <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/trump-vance-potential-targets-china-backed-hacking-operation/>.

³ Krouse, *supra* note 1.

⁴ Sakellariadis, *supra* note 1. (“The Biden administration first acknowledged it was investigating ‘unauthorized access to commercial telecommunications infrastructure’ by Chinese hackers two weeks ago. But it has been tightlipped about the cyber intrusion since, even as press reports have emerged suggesting it is one of the most serious breaches in recent years.”).

⁵ Letter from Sen. Charles E. Grassley, Ranking Member, Senate Budget Committee, to the Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas, Secretary, Department of Homeland Security, the Honorable Jen Easterly, Director, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, and Mr. Ronald R. Rowe, Acting Director, United States Secret Service (Nov. 1, 2024), https://www.grassley.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/grassley_to_cisa_-_cyberattack.pdf; Letter from Sen. Charles E. Grassley, Ranking Member, Senate Budget Committee, to the Honorable Merrick Garland, Attorney General, Department of Justice, and the Honorable Christopher Wray, Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation (Nov. 1, 2024), https://www.grassley.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/grassley_to_doj_and_fbi_-_salt_typhoon_cyberattack.pdf; Press Release, Sen. Charles E. Grassley, *Grassley Conducts Sweeping Oversight of Recent AT&T Hack, Potential National Security Implications* (Aug. 5, 2024), <https://www.grassley.senate.gov/news/news-releases/grassley-conducts-sweeping-oversight-of-recent-atandt->

Department of Homeland Security and its component agencies, as well the Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) requesting information about the Salt Typhoon cyberattack, as well as the steps the agencies are taking to protect American citizens and government officials from these types of attacks.⁶

In August, I wrote to 17 federal agencies and AT&T regarding a cyberattack on the telecommunications company, which resulted in exposure to over 90 million Americans' data, potentially including federal agencies' communications patterns.⁷ I also wrote to CISA on July 3, 2024, regarding a recent cyberattack, which released "critical information about the operation of U.S. infrastructure."⁸ Additionally, on April 8, 2024, I wrote letters to seven of the Sector Risk Management Agencies responsible for overseeing our nation's critical infrastructure to highlight the threat of cyberattacks on our critical infrastructure sectors.⁹ It is imperative that our federal agencies and private companies work together to ensure all data and critical infrastructure is safe and secure against future attacks.

Accordingly, so Congress may conduct objective and independent oversight concerning the Salt Typhoon cyberattack, please provide answers to the following no later than November 28, 2024:

1. How and when did Verizon discover the cyberattack? Provide all records from Verizon internal investigation into this incident.¹⁰
2. When did Verizon alert federal authorities regarding the data breach? Provide all records.
3. How many federal agencies, departments, or organizations were impacted or potentially impacted by the Salt Typhoon cyberattack? Has Verizon communicated with all of these entities? If not, why not?
4. Was Verizon aware of any potential vulnerabilities before the Salt Typhoon cyberattack? If so, what measures did Verizon take to secure customers' data? Provide all records.

[hack-potential-national-security-implications](#); Letter from Sen. Charles E. Grassley, Ranking Member, Senate Budget Committee, to the Honorable Jen Easterly, Director, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (July 3, 2024), https://www.grassley.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/grassley_to_cisa_-_cyberattack.pdf; see also Press Release, Sen. Charles E. Grassley, *Grassley: Federal Agencies Must Stop 'Dragging Their Feet' On Bolstering Cybersecurity Defense* (Apr. 8, 2024), <https://www.grassley.senate.gov/news/news-releases/grassley-federal-agencies-must-stop-dragging-their-feet-on-bolstering-cybersecurity-defense>.

⁶ Nov. 1, 2024, to Mayorkas et. al., *supra* note 5; Nov. 1, 2024, to Garland et. al., *supra* note 5.

⁷ *Grassley Conducts Sweeping Oversight of Recent AT&T Hack, Potential National Security Implications*, *supra* note 5.

⁸ July 3, 2024, to Easterly *supra* note 5.

⁹ *Grassley: Federal Agencies Must Stop 'Dragging Their Feet' On Bolstering Cybersecurity Defense*, *supra* note 5.

¹⁰ "Records" include any written, recorded, or graphic material of any kind, including letters, memoranda, reports, notes, electronic data (emails, email attachments, and any other electronically created or stored information), calendar entries, inter-office communications, meeting minutes, phone/voice mail or recordings/records of verbal communications, and drafts (whether they resulted in final documents).

5. What specific steps is Verizon taking to secure its data from future data breaches and cyberattacks? Provide all records.
6. Did any federal agency warn Verizon of a potential cyberattack by Salt Typhoon or other entity? If so, what agencies and when? Provide a list of all warnings and actors.
7. Provide copies of internal and external cybersecurity audits in the last five years.
8. Provide copies of all contracts that Verizon currently has with the Executive, Judicial, and Legislative branches.
9. Does Verizon employ any legacy IT systems? Were those accessed during the Salt Typhoon cyberattack?

Thank you for your prompt review and responses. If you have any questions, please contact Tucker Akin on my Committee staff at (202) 224-0642.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Grassley
Ranking Member
Committee on the Budget