

# PROTECT OUR ELECTRIC GRID FROM TERROR

by Senator Bob Hall, R-TX

The Electromagnetic Pulse (EMP) threat is not science fiction and its consequences cannot be overstated.

In today's society electricity is the third most important thing to sustaining life; only air and water are more important. Many people will live longer without food than without electricity. In fact, a congressional study by the EMP commission predicted that 90 percent of our population would die within 11 months without electricity.

In short, an EMP is an instantaneous burst or "pulse" of electromagnetic energy resulting from a rapid acceleration of highly charged particles. Although not biologically harmful to humans, an EMP has the capability to destroy — beyond repair — our electric grid which powers all other life-sustaining infrastructures in every state.

For more than a decade, experts have warned about the devastating consequences of an EMP attack on our nation's electric power grid. However, unlike physical and cyber threats, protecting our nation from the threat of an EMP attack or extreme space weather event has been all but ignored by the federal government and the electric power industry.

The serious consequences from an EMP are not new to many. The U.S. Congress has known about the wide-spread and catastrophic damage from an EMP attack or an extreme space weather event.

For more than 50 years, the U.S. military has known about the seriousness of the EMP threat. I first encountered the EMP issue during my active duty service as a Systems Engineer in the United States

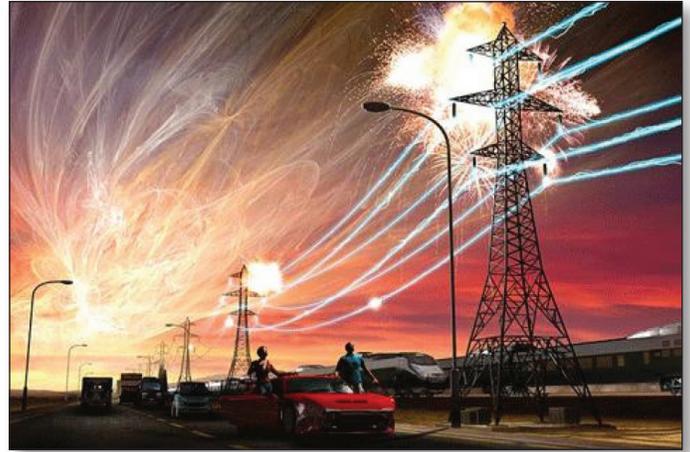
Air Force. At the height of the Cold War, while stationed at Norton Air Force Base, I led a project team of engineers tasked with hardening the Minuteman Missile System II from the Soviet Union's high-altitude nuclear based EMP first strike capability.

Today, the Department of Defense continues to harden its critical components and key strategic assets from the EMP threat by strictly adhering to an array of EMP protection standards, such as MIL-STD 188-125. The North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) has returned to Colorado's Cheyenne Mountain facility to protect itself in the event of an EMP attack. The \$700 million contract to upgrade the electronics inside the facility provides a clue about just how concerned the military is about the EMP threat.

In 2000, Congress mandated the Commission to Assess the Threat from High Altitude Electromagnetic Pulse (The EMP Commission) to examine the threat of EMP to U.S. critical infrastructure and military assets. After several years of study, the commission's report concluded the EMP threat was "one of a small number of threats that has the potential to hold our society at risk and might result in the defeat of our military forces." Furthermore, during testimony to Congress, experts that served on the EMP Commission stressed that a wide-area blackout lasting 11 months or more would bring with it a potentially large-scale death rate in the population.

Unfortunately for the American

people, powerful lobby groups have opposed the passage of necessary grid protection legislation proposed



at the federal level, making it very difficult for Congress to even vote on the issue. Despite the military's understanding of the detrimental consequences from an EMP attack, the federal government has failed to serve the interests of the people.

## TAKE ACTION:

The federal government's failure to act is bad news for our nation, but Eagle Forum encourages you to contact your Congressman about your electric grid's vulnerability from an EMP attack and ask him/her to pass legislation to protect and harden our electric grid. To learn more, you can also check this website, [www.infragard.org](http://www.infragard.org), to see if there is a planned workshop in your area that you can attend.

The economic benefits of a secure electric grid are immeasurable. The social and economic strain resulting from an EMP attack or extreme space weather event would be so catastrophic that several experts contend that recovery would be long and difficult. Let's act now to protect our electric grids from an EMP attack.

