

January 30, 2015

Seeking Feedback on 2015 Tech Committee Initiatives

NEC Technology Committee Members:

We hope that 2015 is off to a great start for all of you. We wanted to touch base with you about several possible initiatives for the Technology Committee this year. We would very much like your feedback on these proposals.

Also, we wanted to share some exciting news about the Council's upcoming 2015 Annual Spring Event in Washington, DC. We have just confirmed [USPTO Deputy Director Michelle Lee](#), who has been nominated by President Obama to be the new Director of the USPTO, as a speaker at our Federal Policy Briefing on the afternoon of March 25. [Click here for more information on the Annual Spring Event.](#)

Proposed 2015 Initiatives:

1. **Special Event: Forum on Cybersecurity Policy in 2015** – Given recent cyber attacks, the issue of cybersecurity has once again come to the forefront in Washington. President Obama [recently announced a legislative proposal relative to cybersecurity](#), and leaders in Congress are also considering measures to prevent and respond to attacks and promote information sharing. Given that cyber threats are an issue across various sectors, we would like to hold a Technology Committee-hosted Council event early in the year to educate and inform Council members about the President's proposal and other legislative and regulatory proposals on the horizon this year. The forum would feature a panel of representatives of NEC member companies with expertise in this area. Please let us know if you are interested in assisting with plans for this forum.
2. **Advocacy for Trade Secrets Protections** – During the 113th Congress, bipartisan legislation was introduced in both the [Senate](#) and [House](#) to enhance protections for trade secrets. Specifically, the bills established a private right of action in Federal court for companies to pursue the misappropriation of trade secrets. We have been in touch with various Council members – both traditional “technology” companies, as well as others such as pharmaceutical and medical device companies – all of whom supported this legislation. We expect that the legislation will be introduced in the 114th Congress and unless there are any objections, the Council plans to support this legislation with letters to the New England delegation, possibly some Op-Ed pieces, and meetings on Capitol Hill. We will be in touch when the legislation is introduced, but if you are interested in this issue, please be in touch with us.
3. **High Skilled Immigration Reform** – As you know, immigration reform, particularly as it relates to highly skilled workers in the STEM fields, was a top priority for the Council in the 113th Congress. Legislation to increase the cap on H-1B visas and to reallocate a portion of the H-1B visa fees to state STEM education programs has been re-introduced in the 114th Congress. The Immigration Innovation Act, or “I-Squared,” has been [re-introduced in the Senate by a bipartisan group of Senators](#). The [Council supported](#) the bill in the 113th Congress and advocated for its inclusion in the comprehensive immigration reform legislation that ultimately passed the Senate. We plan to support this legislation again, with letters to the

New England delegation and perhaps with Capitol Hill meetings if there is interest. Please let us know if you have any concerns or if you are interested in participating in our efforts on this issue.

4. **Patent Litigation Reform** – Abusive patent litigation continues to be a challenge for many companies in the tech sector, and there have been several Patent Litigation Reform proposals in Congress in recent years. From our conversations with many of you, we understand that this is a complicated, very nuanced issue, and while there is consensus that it is a problem that must be addressed, there are differing opinions on the best approach. As such, we have a few options for how the Council can be engaged on this issue:
 - a. Principles – If we can find some common ground on this issue, we could perhaps develop a set of “New England Council Principles for Patent Litigation Reform” that could be shared with the New England delegation.
 - b. Congressional Briefing – In order to educate the New England Congressional delegation and their staffs on how abusive patent litigation impacts businesses in our region, we could host a briefing for Congressional staff on Capitol Hill. We could put together a panel of NEC members who could discuss the problem and its negative impact on their business, outline some possible remedies, and answer questions from Congressional staff. Timing of such an event would be based on when and if this issue begins to gain traction on the Hill.

We could also do some combination of these two options, and of course we can monitor specific legislative proposals to see if we want to weigh in on them. Please let us know your thoughts on this issue.

5. **Cloud Security & Privacy Standard** – Last year, the ISO (International Standards Organization) published [ISO Standard 27018](#), which sets forth guidelines for cloud service providers concerning Personally Identifiable Information (PII). (*See attached primer for more information.*) The standard is meant to strengthen data privacy by adding protections for sensitive customer information stored in the cloud. Given that this standard affects a wide range of NEC members – not just cloud service providers, but any organization that uses cloud storage services – we are considering hosting an educational/informative forum on this standard to help NEC member across a range of sectors understand and comply with the standard. The forum would feature experts from several NEC member businesses. If this issue is of interest or if you would be interested in assisting with this forum, please let us know.

We look forward to your feedback on these proposals and to putting together some robust advocacy and informational initiatives for the committee this year. Please feel free to contact either of us either via phone or email at your convenience to share your thoughts and any other suggestions for the committee.

Thank you,

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