

Colonial pipeline is undamaged, White House official says

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Credit: CC0 Public Domain

The Colonial fuel pipeline that was crippled by a ransomware attack late Friday hasn't suffered damage and can be brought back online "relatively quickly," a White House official said Monday.

"Right now there is not a [supply shortage](#)," deputy national security adviser Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall told reporters in a briefing.

Anne Neuberger, deputy national security adviser for cyber and emerging technologies, said the government is "actively engaged" with Colonial, but that the company hasn't asked for [federal assistance](#) with its cybersecurity. She said the Federal Bureau of Investigation has been probing the ransomware used in the attack since October.

Neuberger said the government hasn't advised the company on whether it should pay ransom demanded by the hackers that attacked the pipeline. Asked whether the hackers are connected to a [foreign government](#), she said that "at this time" they are considered "a criminal actor."

"Our [intelligence community](#) is looking for any ties to any nation-state actors," she said.

The pipeline was idled for the third consecutive day on Monday, as [fuel](#) suppliers increasingly worry about the possibility of gasoline and diesel shortages across the U.S. East Coast. Colonial Pipeline said Sunday that it was still working on a plan to restart the nation's largest fuel pipeline and would once it is "safe to do so, and in full compliance with the approval of all federal regulations."

The company said Monday it expects the pipeline to be "substantially" back in operations by the end of the week.

The attack came as the [energy industry](#) braced for stepped-up demand from summer travelers and the loosening of COVID-19 restrictions nationally. The White House said Sunday that it has launched an interagency working group to address the breach, including planning for options to lessen the impact on the nation's energy supply. The

Department of Energy and the FBI each said they've been in contact with Colonial Pipeline.

President Joe Biden has the ability to invoke an array of emergency powers to keep fuel flowing. On Sunday, he extended the time delivery drivers can spend behind the wheel when transporting fuel, a move intended "to avoid disruption to supply," the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration said.

The president also has the option of waiving the Jones Act, which requires ships to be built and flagged in the U.S. and crewed by American workers to transport goods between U.S. ports. Foreign-flagged tankers could help fill any gap caused by the [pipeline](#)'s crippling, either transporting fuel from the Gulf Coast to New York or from Europe.

The FBI confirmed Monday that ransomware made by a group known as DarkSide was used in the attack. The group posted a message on its dark web page suggesting an affiliate was behind the attack and that it would vet buyers of its ransomware in the future to "avoid social consequences."

"We are apolitical. We do not participate in geopolitics," the message says. "Our goal is to make money and not creating problems for society. From today, we introduce moderation and check each company that our partners want to encrypt to avoid social consequences in the future."

While the inquiry remains in its early stages, some evidence has emerged linking DarkSide to Russia or elsewhere in Eastern Europe.

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