United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE,
AND TRANSPORTATION

WASHINGTON, DC 20510–6125

WEBSITE: http://commerce.senate.gov

December 3, 2018

Mr. Arne M. Sorenson
President and Chief Executive Officer
Marriott International
10400 Fernwood Road
Bethesda, Maryland 20817-1102

Dear Mr. Sorenson:

We write today regarding Marriott International's announcement that the company suffered a data breach affecting up to 500 million consumers.[1] According to Marriott's statement, it was alerted to potential unauthorized access of its Starwood guest reservation database on September 8, 2018. A subsequent investigation revealed that there had been unauthorized access to the network since 2014. As the chairmen of the full Senate Commerce Committee and the relevant subcommittees with oversight jurisdiction, we seek clarification regarding details of the incident.

Of the estimated 500 million consumers impacted by the breach, approximately 327 million of those guests reportedly had a combination of customer data, including personally identifiable information exposed, including name, mailing address, phone number, email address, passport number, Starwood Preferred Guest account information, date of birth, gender, arrival and departure information, reservation date, and communication preference. Additionally, sensitive payment information like payment card numbers and payment card expiration dates were also apparently exposed, but Marriott stated that this specific information was encrypted using the Advanced Encryption Standard (AES-128), which requires two individual components to decrypt the information. Nevertheless, Marriott has also clarified that the company has not yet ruled out that these decryption keys were also taken as a result of the breach.

Marriott has indicated that it has taken action to mitigate the consumer harms associated with a breach of this magnitude and sensitivity—including establishing a website and call center to answer questions about the incident, email campaign to notify impacted consumers, and free enrollment of guests in a monitoring service for exposed personal information online. The company also filed a Form 8-K with the Securities and Exchange Commission to present information related to the incident.

[1] Marriot International News Center, "Marriott Announces Starwood Guest Reservation Database Security Incident," (Nov. 30, 2018).

Protecting consumers remains a key priority of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, and we therefore request answers to the following questions:

1. Please describe the alert from the "internal security tool" received on September 8, 2018. At that time, what was known about the size and scope of the breach, and the sensitivity of the consumer information that was, or was likely to have been, exposed?

2. Please detail the investigative efforts undertaken by Marriott following the September 8, 2018, internal alert. Were there outside parties that were involved in these investigative efforts? If so, then please name those parties. Please describe any findings and the timing of the findings resulting from the investigation.

3. When did Marriott discover that unauthorized access to the Starwood network dated back to 2014?

4. How many consumers had their payment card numbers and/or payment card expiration dates exposed as a result of this breach? Was all of this information encrypted using the AES-128 standard as the statement suggests? When does Marriott expect to know if the decryption components were also exposed as a result of the breach?

5. How was non-payment card information secured? Was personal information, such as passport number, encrypted?

6. Please provide a detailed timeline of the events mentioned above, and any relevant notifications or developments relevant to the breach, investigation, or response efforts.

We look forward to receiving your responses as soon as possible, but no later than 5:00 P.M. on December 17, 2018. Please call Jason Van Beek of the Committee staff at (202) 224-1251 with any questions regarding this request. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

JOHN THUNE
Chairman
Committee on Commerce, Science,
and Transportation

ROGER F. WICKER
Chairman
Subcommittee on Communications
Technology, Innovation, and the Internet

JERRY MORAN
Chairman
Subcommittee on Consumer Protection, Product
Safety, Insurance, and Data Security

cc: The Honorable Bill Nelson, Ranking Member