

With key issues looming, ‘public power’ speaks out at APPA Legislative Rally

The American Public Power Association’s Legislative Rally was held Feb. 24-26 in Washington, D.C. The event reflects a recognition of the federal government’s distant but profound influence over municipal utility operations and costs.

Sixty-one people attended under the MMUA banner. Highlights of the event were a series of in-person meetings with our Congressional delegation and staff, to discuss Minnesota Public Power’s priorities.

The event bolsters the work done throughout the year by MMUA Washington Representative Michael Nolan and APPA’s advocacy team. The Rally brings ‘real people’ to D.C., to tell lawmakers their story and provide real-world examples about how federal policies impact their cities.

As the saying goes, the best lobbyists are an elected officials’ constituents, armed with the facts.

Key members of Congress also address the assembled meeting-goers, providing insight into the current legislative situation on issues of importance to public power.

A number of seminars and events were sprinkled throughout the few days allotted for the meeting. These included MMUA’s reception for Minnesota Congressional members and staff, held in the Longworth House Office Building the evening of Feb. 26. Our large group legislative meetings were mostly



MMUA members are also generally members of a municipal power agency, and here a group of Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency staff and member representatives gathered for a picture, with the U.S. Capitol as a backdrop.

held in the Capitol Visitors Center, with smaller groups venturing to meet with certain delegates in their offices.

Attendees of the event included public power leaders and staff, as well as mayors, city council and board members.

Key issues

Two key areas of discussion at this year’s Legislative Rally where the significant strides made by public power utilities in recent years to cut carbon dioxide emissions, along with the need for providing comparable incentives to public power utilities investing in new generation.

While the issues are largely set by APPA working through its committee processes (see article below), MMUA works with its members to customize position statements to reflect local situations.

Working through its Government Relations Committee, MMUA selected five topics to highlight in its lobbying efforts. They include:

- Responding to Climate Change
- Comparable Incentives for Clean and Renewable Energy
- Modernize Tax-Exempt Financing
- Protect Mid-Band (6 GHz)

Radio Spectrum

- Protecting the Interests of Western Area Power Administration Customers.

You can view and/or download the MMUA position statement booklet (which is pictured at right) from the Public Policy > Federal > Current Issues section of our website.



Climate change among key issues on which APPA delegates take a position

The American Public Power Association (APPA) Legislative Rally is not only a lobbying trip, it gives public power officials the chance to have their voices heard on the formation of key policy positions, through the APPA Legislative and Resolutions (L&R) Committee.

Members of the L&R Committee meet each year at the Rally, to propose and vote on new policy resolutions. These resolutions are eventually voted on by all Association members.

Each APPA member can appoint one delegate to the L&R Committee.

A number of resolutions were approved by the assembled delegates at the Feb. 25 L&R Committee meeting, including what is perhaps our current era’s key issue: Climate Change.

The preamble to *Resolution 20-01, setting Public Power’s Principles for Federal Climate Change Legislation*, notes milestones in the cli-

mate change debate, and actions taken by Public Power utilities to reduce their carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions in response to changes in the economics of power supply resources, energy markets, and customer requests. These actions to reduce Public Power emissions are ongoing.

With the increasing likelihood of climate change legislation moving in Congress in the next several years, APPA believes it is important that any such legislation is econ-

omy-wide, sets clear targets, and provides maximum flexibility to covered entities. For the electric sector, it is imperative that climate change legislation allows the sector to reduce emissions while also maintaining a reliable grid and affordable retail rates.

To that end, the Association resolved that any federal legislation and associated regulations to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions must do so in a way that maintains a reliable electric grid and af-

fordable electric rates for retail customers.

Thus, APPA said, climate legislation should:

- Protect electric customers and the ability of U.S. industries to remain globally competitive by preventing or mitigating substantial rate impacts;
- Recognize regional differences in resources, power supply mix, and electricity consumption;
- Make clear that other sectors of the U.S. economy and

other nations also need to take meaningful action to reduce their emissions;

- Ensure the continued use of all sources of non-emitting energy, including hydropower, wind, solar, geothermal and nuclear power, as well as fossil-fuel based and dispatchable resources, which will be needed to ensure generation diversity, system reliability, and resilience;
- Avoid mandates that rely

Resolutions: see next page

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