

Rep. Sloan Speaks at National Conference, Participates in Leadership Training Program, Visits Presidential Helicopter Unit

Rep. Tom Sloan (R, Lawrence) spoke at the Council of State Governments' (CSG) Annual Conference. CSG is the nation's largest professional organization for legislative, executive, and judicial branch officers and officials.

Sloan's presentation on how new energy technologies can help policy-makers meet the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Clean Power Plan goals and minimize electric rate increases reflected his work in Kansas and with federal energy agencies. "Historically, Americans have tried to work smarter, not harder," Sloan said. "New technologies that increase the amount of electricity that can be moved from renewable generation sources like Kansas' wind farms to coastal customer load centers over high voltage transmission lines, while reducing electric line losses and electro-magnetic fields, benefit consumers. Similarly, technologies that increase the 'stability' of renewable generation and make electricity more affordable provide benefits to businesses and therefore employment opportunities."

Sloan spoke about how technological advances in customer-owned generation that reduce the price of equipment and the electricity generated (e.g., roof-top solar panels, ground source heat pump systems, and small wind turbines) and communications (e.g., smart phones and applications) empower customers to be more equal partners with their traditional electric utilities. "Transactive energy system is the term applied to customer-utility relations when each can monetize their advantages in generation, demand management, frequency regulation, or other ancillary services," Sloan said.

Not every residential or business customer will want or have the capability of generating some or all of their own electricity, but with the growth of instant communications, utilities and customers can signal each other the price for electricity, demand management (reduced electric consumption for a defined time period), and other services. Transactive energy systems will become increasingly popular as more electric vehicles enter service and electricity can be bought to recharge the batteries or sold to the electric system to help utilities manage their peak electric demands.

Sloan's comments focused on how compact electric transmission line designs, transactive energy systems, Volt-Var, energy storage, and other technologies permit policy-makers to develop energy policies to meet the EPA goals, increase electric system reliability and resiliency, reduce infrastructure impacts on view sheds, and minimize the need for electric rate increases.

Rep. Sloan also participated in the CSG Leadership Academy that was sponsored by the Henry Toll Fellowship Program. Sloan was selected for the week-long Toll Fellowship program for state legislators and members of the executive and judicial

branches of state government in 1997. The Leadership Academy was a one day “refresher” course with emphasis on identifying leadership and follower styles to maximize productivity in the workplace. The Academy included a presentation on how the use of social media can help constituents and legislators stay connected and a mock interview with an “aggressive” reporter. “The Leadership Academy experience was beneficial in terms of re-emphasizing that not all legislators respond to the same type of communications and information delivery systems,” said Sloan. “Coalition building depends on education and persuasion, sometimes we get in a ‘rut’ and try to reach everyone using the same verbal ‘pictures’ or technical arguments. The Academy was a good reminder that policy-makers need to listen to how our communications are received or not received and adjust our messages accordingly.”

Prior to attending the CSG Conference and Leadership Academy, Sloan visited the Presidential Helicopter Unit, HMX 1, staffed by the U.S. Marines at Quantico, VA. “This was an exceptional opportunity to not only see the helicopters, but talk with the flight crew members about their training and experiences,” Sloan said. “We all have seen television coverage of the President arriving at the White House or some other location by helicopter, talking with the pilots of those helicopters about the safety training, aircraft maintenance, and protective measures was fascinating.” Sloan visited the Marine base as a leading member of the National Conference of State Legislatures’ Military & Veterans Affairs Task Force.

Sloan serves on several U.S. Department of Energy and Federal Communications Commission advisory committees and is a frequent speaker at national meetings on energy policies from a state perspective. He is Vice Chairman of the Kansas House of Representatives’ Vision 2020 Committee and a member of the Transportation and Agriculture & Natural Resources Committees. He is serving his 11th term in the Kansas Legislature.

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