

Rep. Sloan Speaks at CSG-West Annual Meeting

August 7, 2013

Rep. Tom Sloan (R, Lawrence) delivered a key address on a proposed Interstate Electric Transmission Siting Compact at the Council of State Governments (CSG) Western Region Annual Meeting. CSG is an international organization through which executive, legislative, and judicial branch leaders from U.S. states and Canadian provinces exchange best practice ideas.

Sloan spoke on the three-year process to develop a Compact that states could adopt to streamline the siting of interstate electric transmission lines, while protecting the public's ability to influence the siting decisions. The Compact was developed in response to the Federal Energy Policy Act of 2005 (EPACT 05) that requires the Department of Energy to identify transmission corridors and provides the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission "backstop" transmission siting authority if states do not act quickly enough to approve transmission line applications. EPACT 05 specifically authorizes states to form Compacts and Rep. Sloan initiated the CSG Compact development process to protect state public and citizen options.

"The nation and Kansas need an improved high voltage electric transmission system to move large quantities of renewable energy from rural areas to the urban customers in cities along the coasts," Sloan said. "My presentation to the legislators and others at the CSG-W meeting was to introduce the concept of collaboratively siting transmission lines that can move wind and solar energy from states like Wyoming, Nevada, Arizona, and Kansas to customers in California."

One of the primary impediments to constructing new transmission lines in western states is the amount of land owned and managed by the federal government. The Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Park Service, and other agencies control up to 80 percent of land in some western states. One of the most highly discussed topics related to the proposed Compact was whether federal agencies would actually participate in those hearings and negotiations.

"Participants in the CSG-W Energy and Public Lands Committee discussion were favorably disposed to the idea of the Compact and the ability of states to collectively preclude federal energy agencies from making transmission siting decisions across private lands," said Sloan. "My task now is to initiate discussions with the heads of the federal agencies that own large tracts of land and secure Memorandums of Agreement to participate with the states. This will not be an easy task, but the ability to move Kansas wind energy west is dependent on our succeeding in this endeavor."

Sloan is Co-Chairman of the CSG Interstate Electric Transmission Siting Compact Task Force, a member of the Department of Energy's Electricity Advisory Committee, a member of the Federal Communication Commission's Intergovernmental Affairs Committee, and Chairman of the Kansas House of Representatives' Vision 2020 Committee. He is serving his 10th term in the Kansas House.

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