

Big Impacts and Changes at TEP Energy Independence Summit 2019

The 2019 version of the Energy Independence Summit (EIS), presented by Transportation Energy Partners (TEP) marked some big changes for the organization and continued success with the event and its goals.

Attendance at the 2019 Summit on February 11-13 was up over the prior year – particularly among local stakeholders and Clean Cities coordinators. Platinum sponsors were UPS, EarthX, and Nissan. At the Gold level we had VW/Audi, Westport, United Soybean Board, and REG. Silver sponsors included Ozinga Energy, National Biodiesel Board, Roush, NGV America, Altec, National Propane Gas Association, Neste, Altec, and Icom. Attendees were treated to a strong agenda on Monday, the 11th. On the 12th, most attendees divided into state teams for visits to Congressional offices. Wednesday, the 13th, focused on sessions with federal agencies, including DOE, FHWA, EPA, and others.

The increased attendance enabled various state delegations to make 240 combined visits to Congressional offices on Capitol Hill. The primary focus was education about the work of local coalitions, fleets and industry stakeholders. In addition, some delegation members were able to focus on TEP's policy priorities, including:

- Renewal of tax credits for natural gas, propane, biofuels and electric vehicle charging
- Funding for the DOE Clean Cities program and USEPA Clean Diesel program
- Action to get CMAQ vehicle projects moving through the Buy America waiver process
- Continuation of the successful federal Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) in its present form

Prior to the Summit, the TEP Board elected a new slate of leaders. Alleyn Harned, Executive Director for Virginia Clean Cities, was elected as the new President. Tammie Bostick and Brian Trice, Utah Clean Cities and Columbia-Willamette Clean Cities respectively, were elected as new Vice-Presidents. Phillip Wiedmeyer, President of Alabama Clean Fuels, also will continue as VP for the next several months. Lee Grannis, Executive Director of New Haven Clean Cities, was re-elected as Treasurer but the organization plans a transition to a new Treasurer over the next several months. Bonnie Trowbridge, new Executive Director of Denver Clean Cities, was elected as the new Secretary. After 12 years as TEP's President, Sam Spofforth, Executive Director of Clean Fuels Ohio, moved into the position of Immediate Past President and will remain on the Executive Committee. Kimberly Taylor rotated off as Secretary. All 15 members Board of Directors will remain. Ken Brown continues to serve as TEP's Principal DC-based consultant.

This year also marks the 25-year anniversary of formation of National Clean Cities Inc (NCCI), the forerunner to TEP. Many people may not be aware that the USDOE Clean Cities program encouraged formation of NCCI to help support a small but increasing number of coalitions that were forming or transitioning to become non-profit organizations and needed assistance. NCCI's Board included only industry members, no coalitions, and the organization was able to hold a few small "Washington Days" events. NCCI changed its name to TEP in 2006 but was not able to continue. Fortunately, some committed Clean Cities coordinators were able to join forces with a few of the existing TEP industry Board members to reorganize and revive the organization. The newly formed Board also revived and held the first annual EIS in 2008.

The organization has come a long way over 12 years. Perhaps its greatest success has been to increase the awareness and support from Congress for the work of local Clean Cities coalitions and the impacts of the program overall. TEP's annual Summit has become the nation's premier fuel/technology inclusive

policy conference. In addition to increasing awareness and support, TEP has greatly impacted Congressional appropriations for Clean Cities and support for key policies such as tax credits, the RFS and much more. While still relatively small in annual budget, TEP punches above its weight and has become indispensable for its work with coalitions, stakeholders and policy-makers.

For those who missed the Summit this year, you can contact your local Clean Cities coalitions about how you can support these efforts. Finally, be sure to mark your calendars now for the 2020 version of the Summit, February 10-12, 2020.