

On Killing Golden Egg Laying Geese

[Share on Facebook](#) [Share on twitter](#) [Share on email](#) [Share on gmail](#) [More Sharing Services](#)1

Published: June 13, 2012: ALASKA BUSINESS MONTHLY

Can Well Intended Regulation and Lawmaking Kill Golden Egg Laying Geese?

Meeting Report and Commentary by Dave Harbour



Report: Oregon Congressman **Greg Walden**([NGP Photo](#)) told members of the [Western Conference of Public Service Commissioners](#)(WCPSC), meeting yesterday at Sunriver Resort, that the House is, "...committed to not having everything pile up like a train wreck at the end of the year."

Walden is chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Communications and Technology. His committee's Senior Advisor on Communications and Technology is **Ray Baum** [NGP \(Photo, with Congressman Walden\)](#). Baum is the former, well respected Chairman of Oregon's Public Utility Commission and Chairman of the Telecommunications Committee for the [National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners](#) (NARUC).



While Walden mostly briefed commissioners on telecommunication issues, he did express concern about the importance and broad array of critical issues facing the Congress--and affecting energy stakeholders among others. He mentioned several issues that he said the leadership is "committed" to resolving before the end of the year, including:

- tax code expirations
- debt ceiling increase
- transportation bill
- unpassed appropriation bills required to, "keep the government open"

* * *

Commentary: While this meeting was beautifully organized and executed by its Oregon hosts, we note with some chagrin the minimal attention given fossil fuel's importance in maintaining the lowest possible utility costs. Virtually all of the presentations of this conference focused on alternate energy sources--and not on the higher costs this focus would transfer to ***the future generation of consumers*** as regulatory bias against fossil fuel for heating and power seems to be increasing.

Accordingly, we urge commissioners and other decision makers to place more weight on the effect of their decisions upon average American citizens. Lawmakers and regulators are mostly

well intended. But good intention cannot overcome the inevitable devastation wrought by higher utility costs in a depressed, job-constrained economy.

We must ask: is good intention (i.e. global warming hysteria, smart metering, higher government subsidies for mal performing fuel producers, higher taxes for profitable fuel producers, job killing "renewable portfolio standards", illogical blocking of OCS and pipeline projects, etc.) threatening to kill many geese that have laid many golden eggs throughout America and throughout our country's history?

Finally, we note that as this well-intended generation of lawmakers and regulators increases utility costs by increasing reliance on high-cost heating and power sources, they are really violating the time-honored regulatory tradition of avoiding "intergenerational inequity".

Most of our utility costs now are ameliorated by a strong fossil fuel content. As current decisions decrease low cost fossil fuel content in utility bills, the greater cost of supporting less efficient alternatives will be borne more by our children than by us.

Your author is former Chairman and member of the Regulatory Commission of Alaska, Chairman of the WCPSC's Gas Committee and Co-Vice Chairman of NARUC's Gas Committee. As a NARUC Commissioner Emeritus, we continue to attend national and regional regulatory commissioner meetings.

National Journal: [Waste Solution Must Consider Consumers](#), Op-Ed by **David**

Holt(NGP Photo). The federal government must prioritize American rate payers who have been forced to bear the burden of Washington's failure to solve nuclear waste management. Over the thirty-years since Congress passed the Nuclear Waste Policy Act, continued political stalemate has allowed the federal government to essentially abdicate its responsibility for waste management to the utilities, and effectively, to millions of nuclear energy consumers. Since then, utilities and rate payers have paid nearly \$30 billion into the Nuclear Waste Fund, without any federal resolution, as well as paid for the escalating costs of onsite storage, whether in water-filled pools or in dry casks. Not to mention, as of 2010 the federal government had spent over \$192 million in litigation expenses associated with the government's failure to fulfill its legal obligations. It's no wonder taxpayers and rate payers have lost some trust in the government's willingness and ability to resolve the matter and better prioritize the public interest.



www.northerngaspipelines.com

More: [Oil & Gas Articles](#) »