

The State(s) of Our Industry

Since the state of our industry increasingly depends on the states, AGA is tackling new roles.



DAVID N. PARKER
President and CEO
dparker@aga.org

AS THE NATIONAL association representing natural gas utilities, AGA's highest priority is advocating on their behalf before Congress and the federal agencies that regulate our member utilities. Meanwhile, our members have always taken primary responsibility for dealing with their state regulators and legislative bodies, with AGA providing advice and assistance when our members ask us to.

Which they are doing more and more often as our members face an ever-expanding number of challenges in their states. If, as the saying goes, the states are "the laboratory for change," AGA increasingly is being asked by our members to put on a lab coat and pitch in.

That starts with increasing our interaction with the national organizations that represent state regulators and legislators. To that end, never in our history has AGA had closer ties with the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC), whose members regulate our member companies in the states. AGA's Kyle Rogers is our point person for working collaboratively with NARUC, as well as keeping its members informed about the high-priority issues and concerns our members face. To give just one example, AGA's highly successful financial outreach program, which Kyle helps manage, brings together state regulators and the financial community to exchange views on how regulatory decisions, and financial decisions, affect each other with respect to the natural gas utility industry.

In addition, as federal regulations are developed in Washington—regulations that ultimately filter down to the states—AGA helps our members better understand the potential impact of those regulations and the most effective and cost-effective ways to adopt them. Increasingly, AGA staff also is asked by mem-

bers to testify on a variety of issues, from gas supply to safety, at state regulatory hearings, which we are happy to do.

The same is true from the state legislative perspective. Led by Executive Vice President, Public Affairs, Rick Shelby, AGA's government relations team has developed extremely close relationships with the Democratic and Republican governors associations, the state attorneys general association and the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), whose members represent the legislative bodies in all 50 states. In fact, AGA's Tom Moskitis is private sector co-chair of the ALEC Natural Resources Task Force, which has greatly enhanced our ability to provide ALEC with input on key issues related to increasing domestic supplies of natural gas. With Tom's encouragement, that task force recently passed a resolution promoting greater access to the abundant natural gas supplies in America's Outer Continental Shelf.

Finally, by strengthening our relationships with state regulators and legislators, AGA often is able to enlist their support on the federal issues that we advocate for our members here in Washington.

In sum, ever mindful that state regulatory and legislative issues are primarily the purview of our members, AGA has become a repository of information and a valuable resource that our members can count on in responding to both the challenges and opportunities they face in their states. Since the state of our industry increasingly depends on the states, AGA is ready to lend a hand. ♡