

# NEWS RELEASE

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## SENATOR STOLLINGS SERVES AS KEYNOTE SPEAKER AT ENERGY POLICY SUMMIT ON CAPITOL HILL

MADISON , WV. . . State Senator Ron Stollings was invited to be the keynote speaker at the EmPower Consumers Congressional Policy Summit held Tuesday at the United States Capitol Visitor's Center.

The Summit convened consumer organizations, trade, labor and agricultural groups and elected officials to discuss pending climate legislation including effective ways to address consumer concerns.

“As a physician I make decisions every day that weigh risks and benefits,” Senator Stollings told the group. “And as a state senator we make decisions that weigh the consequences and unintended consequences of proposed legislation. Sometimes the risks outweigh the benefits in both treatment of disease and enacting legislation. I believe that is true with the Waxman-Markey Cap and Trade bill passed by the House of Representatives,” he said.

Senator Stollings said cap and trade will increase the cost of electricity by doubling, at least, the cost of coal used by electric utilities to generate electricity. It will endanger our industrial competitiveness, raise the cost of electricity to all consumers and reduce the operational capacity of our nation's power plants.

He said lower income families spend a greater share of their income on energy and other goods than other income brackets. It is estimated with an average income of \$10,000 these families would spend around 20 percent of their income on energy.

“Increases in West Virginia's energy costs under the Waxman-Markey bill would impact energy expenditures throughout all state sectors. Specifically, West Virginia's 1,005 schools and 72 hospitals will likely experience a 20 to 30 percent increase in energy expenditures by 2030 according to the national manufacturer's association,” he noted.

“Our nation's industrial economy depends on affordable, secure sources of energy. Our nation wants to move to cleaner fuels. Solar, wind and biomass can play a larger role in meeting our nation's energy needs. In West Virginia, these renewable energy sources are playing a larger role in our energy portfolio. While we go green, we need to also focus on the energy security and cost benefits that base load fossil sources can deliver. Our nation's fleet of coal plants brings both stability and economic efficiency to the electric grid,” Stollings said.

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Enhancing environmental performance of fossil fuels should be brought about through energy research and demonstration he said.

“If our goal is to reduce CO<sup>2</sup> emissions, we should be bringing on new coal technologies such as oxy fired coal or integrated gasification combined cycle plants rather than penalizing the use of coal through a cap and trade program,” Stollings said.

EmPower is a national non-profit organization formed by consumers to ensure policy makers consider the impact new energy policies have on consumer electric bills. While EmPower Consumers seeks to represent all consumers of electricity, the primary focus is the working middle class, minorities, and the economically disadvantaged.

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