



AMERICAN PUBLIC GAS ASSOCIATION

Summary of the 2020 Elections

After primaries, debates, and elections, all with coronavirus (COVID-19) as a backdrop, 2020 election day was held yesterday. From early counts, this may be the highest-turnout election in decades, which could be attributed to numerous reasons. As of October 28th, there had already been 71 million ballots cast through the mail, according to one tracking service. Several races are still outstanding due to this high number of mail-in ballots. Based on current results, Republicans fared much better in House and Senate races than polls had indicated, while it seems like Joe Biden has a favorable path to the White House.

House

Early House projections had Democrats picking up between five and 20 House seats, further padding their majority. Yet polls seemed to miss the mark, as Republicans not only fended off additional Democrat gains but may actually net seats in the House.

While the Republican and Democrat caucuses will vote officially on their leadership when the 117th Congress begins on January 3rd, it is anticipated the top leadership in the House for both parties will remain unchanged. The Speaker of the House will still be Representative (Rep.) Nancy Pelosi (D-CA-12). The Majority Leader will be Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-MD-05), and the Majority Whip will be Rep. Jim Clyburn (D-SC-06). The Republican Leader will be Rep. Kevin McCarthy (R-CA-23); the Republican Whip, Rep. Steve Scalise (R-LA-01); and the Republican Conference Chair, Rep. Liz Cheney (R-WY-AL).

Of significant importance to APGA members is the leadership of the House Energy and Commerce (E&C) Committee, given their oversight of energy and environment related issues. It is anticipated that Congressman Pallone (D-NJ-06) will continue in his role of Chairman in the 117th Congress. There will be a new Ranking Member, however, as Rep. Greg Walden (R-OR-02) is retiring. Reps. Michael Burgess (R-TX-26), Bob Latta (R-OH-05), and Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA-05) are in the running to replace him.

Another important committee, as they, in addition to the House E&C Committee, have jurisdiction over the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), is the House Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee. Its leadership looks to remain relatively unchanged. T&I Chairman Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-OR-04) staved off a significant challenge for his seat and will remain atop the Committee, while Rep. Sam Graves (R-MO-06) stays as Ranking Member. However, both the Chair and Ranking Member of the pertinent Pipeline Subcommittee will change. Rep. Dan Lipinski (D-IL-03) lost his primary, and Rep. Rick Crawford (R-AR-01) will likely move to the House Natural Resources Committee.

Speaking of the House Natural Resources Committee, which is likely of interest to APGA members. The Chair will be Congressman Raul Grijalva (D-AZ-03). There is rumor that he may be selected for an Administration position however, possibly a Cabinet spot, if Joe Biden becomes President. The Ranking Member for House Natural Resources will change as Rep. Rob Bishop (R-UT-01) is retiring. Possible

replacements include Reps. Doug Lamborn (R-CO-05), Rob Wittman (R-VA-01), or Tom McClintock (R-CA-04).

Too, given their significance in research funding allocation, the House Appropriations Committee leadership may be noteworthy. The Chair will be new, as Rep. Nita Lowey (D-NY-17) is retiring. Candidates to replace her are Reps. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT-03), Marcy Kaptur (D-OH-09), or Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL-23). The Ranking Member will remain Rep. Kay Granger (R-TX-12).

Finally, given potential to take up tax legislation germane to APGA's members, it should be noted that the House Ways and Means leadership will remain unchanged, with Rep. Richard Neal (D-MA-01) being the Chair, the Ranking Member will continue to be Rep. Kevin Brady (R-TX-08).

Senate

While not official, it appears Republicans will significantly outperform prognostications. The general consensus had Republicans losing between three and seven Senate seats. As of now, though, Republicans appear to have maintained the majority and may even pick up a seat. Several Senators, notably Thom Tillis (R-NC) and Susan Collins (R-ME), look to have defeated extremely strong challengers and outperformed nearly every poll. If Republicans maintain control of the upper chamber as the final vote counts come in, there will be turnover on some key committees.

The Chairmanship of Senate Energy & Natural Resources (ENR) Committee will be contingent on what Senator (Sen.) John Barrasso chooses to do. He has the option to helm ENR or the Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) committee. Most that are monitoring Senate leadership moves seem to think Sen. Barrasso will choose to be ENR Chair. Sen. Joe Manchin (D-WV) will stay on as ranking member of ENR.

If Sen. Barrasso chooses to chair ENR, the EPW Committee could have a few options for its Chairman. Sens. Jim Rish (R-ID), Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV), and Mike Lee (R-UT) all have paths to lead. Sen. Tom Carper (D-DE) will stay on as Ranking Member at EPW, and there could be some other changes on the Committee due to additional shuffling.

Another pertinent Committee for APGA members is the Finance Committee, which will be led by Republican Mike Crapo (R-ID), as Chuck Grassley (R-NE) is term-limited. The Democrat leader will be Ron Wyden (D-OR). Further turnover there is possible as well.

Finally, the Committee with no changes but with impacts to APGA members is the Senate Commerce, Science, & Transportation (Commerce) Committee. Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-WA) will be the Ranking members, and Sen. Roger Wicker (R-MS) will be the Chairman.

As with the House, leadership in the Senate will have to be approved by the members when the next session begins. However, it seems the Democrat leadership in the Senate will be Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-NY), and the Democratic Whip will be Sen. Dick Durbin (D-IL). On the other side of the aisle, the Republican Leader will be Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-KY), and the Republican Whip, Sen. John Thune (R-SD).

Administration

There is a lot to transpire before we know who will occupy the White House for the next 4 years, yet it appears Joe Biden has a likely path to victory. Of most interest to APGA members will be who is in the top spot at the Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Department of Energy (DOE), which will significantly impact the individuals leading the pertinent agencies, the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) and the Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Office (EERE). To a certain degree, especially given some of the recent proposed environmental regulations for pipelines, who is head of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will be pertinent. One key question to watch if Joe Biden becomes President-elect will be his managing all the requests for Cabinet spots. Will he be more progressive or moderate in filling? Being more moderate may allow some corporate heads or lobbyists to be a part of the new Administration, but this is being challenged by the more progressive Democrats, who don't want those types of individuals to serve. It has also been reported that Biden may institute a ban on Senators taking Cabinet positions. The transition process will provide insight on who Biden considers, which is a process that has already begun but will take several weeks and months. Given that Republicans will likely hold onto the Senate, Cabinet nominations will have to be palatable enough to get 51 votes.

For reference, if Joe Biden is elected, there is likely confirmations on the more significant Cabinet positions sooner, such as Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense. Others, such as Secretary of Transportation, will come a little later, and then, the Agency leads, like the PHMSA Administrator, will come much later. The PHMSA Administrator, Skip Elliott, was confirmed on October 5th, 2017, almost a full year after the election. As a reminder, too, the Senate confirms Presidential nominees, so the dynamics in that chamber could also impact confirmation timing.

If the remaining votes are counted and President Trump is reelected, expect some changes in his Cabinet as well. Secretary Brouillette is likely to stay at DOE, given he is fairly new in that role. Secretary Wheeler, at EPA, may move on, given he has been in that position for a while now. It is uncertain if Secretary Chao, the head of DOT, will leave. She has been at that Department, since early in the Trump Administration. Most likely will be changes at the Agency level within the Departments. Skip Elliott at PHMSA is expected to leave at the end of this year. As well, there is rumor that Dan Simmons, the lead at EERE, will move on. Regardless of who is in the White House, again, their nominees will have to be confirmed by the Senate, and this could have significant impact on who and when any new Department or Agency heads are put in place.

States

There were 11 governorships decided this year, which was considerably fewer than in 2018. Seven were held by Republicans; four were held by Democrats. Each party defended one open seat, with no incumbent. In Montana, Steve Bullock (D) is term-limited and ran for Senate, so Lieutenant Governor (Lt. Gov.) Mike Cooney (D) faced Representative Greg Gianforte (R). A little south in Utah, Governor Gary Herbert (R) retired, matching up Lt. Gov. Spencer Cox against the Democrat, Chris Peterson. Below are the gubernatorial winners from 2020:

- John Carney, Jr. (D-DE)
- Eric Holcomb (R-IN)
- Mike Parson (R-MO)

- Greg Gianforte (R-MT)
- Chris Sununu (R-NH)
- Roy Cooper (D-NC)
- Doug Burgum (R-ND)
- Spencer Cox (R-UT)
- Phil Scott (R-VT)
- Jay Inslee (D-WA)
- Jim Justice (R-WV)

These Governor seats, along with those elected in 2018, could have an impact on the redistricting that will occur due to the results of this year's census. In some states, Governors veto or approve Congressional maps, so their decisions on how the Districts are shaped could provide for like-minded voters to be grouped together, making it easier for a party to win an election until the next census in 2030.

What's Next?

APGA will be monitoring and updating members, as the votes are confirmed for the Presidential election in those last remaining states, and the Senate majority and minority become clearer. Also, as whoever fills the White House begins to make his Cabinet selections or modifications, any positions with impacts will be identified for members.

As well, with the understanding of who is in charge, it will be important to determine what is on their agenda. This is subject to change but given the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, recovery funding for it and health care will be "top of mind."

There should be a little more certainty next week, so be sure to tune in to APGA's Election Impacts Webinar on November 10th at 2:30 pm ET. Check out www.apga.org/webinars for more information, including how to register.

With some changes, APGA staff will begin to reach out to new Congressional members and let them know of public natural gas utility advocacy priorities. Even more so, it will be critical to have APGA member engagement with a reelected or new Administration and the 117th Congress. You can best explain how policy can impact your systems. Be on the lookout for more from the State Ambassador Program. As well, if you have a member on the Public Gas Policy Council (PGPC), encourage him or her to be more engaged in supporting public gas utilities in 2021 and beyond.

Finally, mark your calendars for APGA's virtual fly-in the first quarter of 2021 and watch for more information on this event in the upcoming weeks.