

General Overview of the **Inaugural Government Track:** U.S. Presidential/Government Transitions

The U.S. Presidential election is only two weeks away! It will be followed by many months of transition, with uncertainty as to who will be in charge of what; how policies, spending, and contracting might change; and what expectations for those already working in government agencies will be.

Do you wonder how you, your work, or your agency/company/organization might be affected?

Beginning with the Tulsa conference, the USAEE will include a program track designed to add additional value for government employees and others who are affected by government actions. This year, after an opening plenary session that addresses energy-related views of the two major parties, the Government Track will dive into the transition *process* and implications for those most affected during the initial period after a new administration takes office. What will or might happen, and how can those affected constructively respond to minimize foreseen and unforeseen problems?

The prolonged period without clear direction and/or agency contacts who can speak with authority can affect those coming into office, those already on staff, and third parties as well. During Presidential (and other government) transitions,

- there can be long periods during which the new administration has only the top appointees in place,
- most caretaker managers “acting” in other positions postpone important decisions until receiving clear guidance,
- the best points of contact might be unidentified or unclear.
- agency employees and stakeholders often wonder how they should proceed.

In each of the three Inaugural Government Track sessions, current and former high-level officials will address transitions from a different vantage point, that of

- the political party (or individual during an Administration) coming into power or a position;
- the acting incumbent and his/her staff and reporting offices; and
- the stakeholders affected by the first two.

Panelists will offer lessons/suggestions as to how attendees can make the process of transition more effective and efficient.

Do you have lessons to share from your experience with political transitions that might benefit others in the audience? Do you have questions about the challenges you or your organization might face? Come share in the extended discussion periods following each session!

Session 1: Transition from the Point of View of the Incoming Political Party

Monday, October 24, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.

This session lays the groundwork for all three, starting with a brief explanation of the mechanics of the Presidential transition process, including what happens and over what timelines, legal guidelines, and recent changes designed to make the process smoother.

Among the topics to be addressed:

- How political appointees view career staff.
- Expectations career staff have of political appointees.

- Timing expectations of political appointees – how long before things are working the way they want.
- How political appointees want to be treated by career staff.
- Political appointee views regarding how work gets accomplished and how realistic their views of the Executive Branch were.
- How political/career relationships get built. What makes them successful? What causes them to fail?

President: Abe Haspel, former Assistant Deputy Secretary, Department of the Interior; Deputy Assistant Secretary, Department of Energy (Currently, President, Cogent Analysis Group, LLC)

Speakers Brian Waidmann, former Chief of Staff to two Cabinet Secretaries (Interior); Senior Advisor, (George W.) Bush Administration transition team (Currently Chief of Staff, American Council of Life Insurers)
 Elgie Holstein, former member of Obama transition team; Chief of Staff, Department of Energy (Currently, Senior Director for Strategic Planning, Environmental Defense Fund)
 Ross Swimmer, former Principal Chief, Cherokee Nation; Assistant Secretary and Special Trustee for American Indians, Department of the Interior (Currently, Partner, Native American Fund Advisors, LLC)

Session 2: Transition from the Point of View of Agency Personnel

Monday, October 24, from 4:30-6:15 p.m.

Among the topics to be addressed:

- How career staff view political appointees.
- What career staff think political appointees want and expect of them.
- What career employees view as their roles and responsibilities in a transition vis a vis political appointees.
- How interactions between career staff and political appointees occur.
- How political/career relationships get built.
- What is going on with senior career people from the point of view of less senior career people.
- What senior career people expect of less senior career people.
- The stress that sometimes accompanies a transition.
- How the top “acting” officials are determined, and how agency work can continue smoothly for the sometimes long periods when the temporary caretakers do not feel comfortable making major decisions without administration guidance.

President: Abe Haspel, former Assistant Deputy Secretary, Department of the Interior; Deputy Assistant Secretary, Department of Energy (Currently, President, Cogent Analysis Group, LLC)

Speakers Howard Gruenspecht, Deputy Administrator, U.S. Energy Information Administration, former Deputy Assistant Secretary and Director in Office of Policy, Department of Energy
 Jane Lyder, former Deputy Assistant Secretary and Legislative Counsel, Department of the Interior
 Tom Russo, more than 30 years as Manager and Sr Energy Industry Analyst, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (Currently, President, Russo on Energy LLC)

Session 3: Transition from the Point of View of Outside Stakeholders

Tuesday, October 25, 8:30-10:15 a.m.

Among the topics to be addressed:

- What does/doesn't happen during a transition from the stakeholder's point of view—are there especially important aspects of transitions that stakeholders might want to pay attention to or prepare for.
- What stakeholders need most from career/political staff during the transition process.
- How one can interact with career staff during a transition.
- What career staff should do when dealing with stakeholders during a transition.
- What one's expectations should be during a transition.

President: Arnold Baker, former Chief Economist, Sandia National Laboratories; Director of Political Economic Analysis and other Management Positions, Atlantic Richfield Company (Currently, principal of ABB Consulting)

Speakers Keller Staley, Senior Vice President, Longenecker & Associates; 30 years of experience managing complex, multimillion dollar contracts for Department of Energy
Mary Lashley Barcella, Director, North American Gas, Cambridge Energy Research Associates
John Jimison, former Senior Counsel, Energy and Commerce Committee, House of Representatives (Currently, Managing Director of the Energy Future Coalition)
John Felmy, Chief Economist (Retired), American Petroleum Institute (Currently, Midnight Energy Economics)

We are delighted to have Stephen St. Marie, California PUC Advisor on Policy and Planning, serve as Rapporteur for the Government Track and each of its three panels, providing written panel summaries and an overall integration of advice and recommendations for future reference and for the benefit of those who cannot attend one or more sessions.

Click [here](#) for registration information.