In recent years, many respected organizations have tackled the challenge of formulating a new energy and climate policy for the United States. However, none of their reports have addressed in detail the process of designing, assessing, proposing, enacting, and implementing a national energy security and climate policy. In an effort to address those details and fulfill President Obama’s goal of transparency within agencies, a diverse coalition of professionals gathered in Washington, D.C. on June 18-19, 2009 to participate in a conference entitled, “Formulation of Energy and Climate Policy: Toward an Open and Transparent Process.”

UTCN Executive Committee Member and Researcher Dr. Arnie Vedlitz, Director of the Institute for Science, Technology, and Public Policy at Texas A&M University’s Bush School of Government and Public Service, was invited by the Howard Baker, Jr. Center for Public Policy and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars to help organize and participate in the groundbreaking conference. Dr. Vedlitz’s participation was partially supported by the UTCN project, “Transportation Planning, Policy and Climate Change: Making the Long Term Connection.” Dr. Jeryl Mumpower, Director of the Master of Public Service and Administration (MPSA) Program at the Bush School, also attended and participated in this important conference.

“The purpose of the workshop was to get everyone focused on looking at the issues of climate policy from a holistic perspective,” says Vedlitz. “We talked a lot about interactions of the various elements – the scientific community, economic realities, the public’s wishes, what people will actually use, what people are willing to pay for, and what kinds of government responses are going to be necessary in the form of infrastructure or taxation changes.”

One of the afternoon sessions focused on low carbon transportation options. This session explored what kinds of scientific and engineering solutions could merge with governmental and economic realities to produce vehicles that save more energy while polluting less. “One of the things discussed in this session was an option that is actively being explored at Texas A&M, and that is the possibility of a plug-in hybrid vehicle, so that was a major source of information,” says Vedlitz.

This two day conference is the second event in the “Joint Program on Presidential Policy-Making: Formulating a Bipartisan Energy and Climate Policy for America.” The joint program was formed to explore how best to assist policymakers in understanding the implications of various energy and climate policy options.

The next step for the 15 organizers and sponsors of the workshop is to recommend persons for participation in a group of some 500 major stakeholders, scientists, and government officials. The group will meet via real-time conferencing to share ideas and propose solutions. Following this conference, the group will submit a final report to President Obama.

Related information and links, including the conference program and streaming video of all sessions, is available on the UTCN website at http://utcn.tamu.edu/technology_transfer/t2news.stm#080609.

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Vedlitz Participates in National Energy and Climate Policy Conference Formed to Advise President Obama