



Weekly Message from Marc W. Smith

In the past month, two more important institutions have recognized the solutions that natural gas can provide to help create jobs, lower greenhouse gas emissions and reduce our dependence on foreign energy.

Yesterday, the Western Governors Association issued a strong endorsement for natural gas vehicles. In a letter to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, the Governors urged Congress to “include provisions to incentivize the use and development of natural gas vehicles (NGVs) and NGV infrastructure in legislation to be considered by Congress this session.

[The letter, signed by WGA Chairman Governor Brian Schweitzer \(D-Montana\) and WGA Vice Chairman Governor C.L. Butch Otter \(R-Idaho\)](#) is concise and well-written, with a clear rationale for using more natural gas to fuel U.S. vehicles:

“The use of natural gas as a transportation fuel is a domestic solution to a variety of critical issues. Ninety-eight percent of the natural gas we consume is produced right here in North America. Additionally, natural gas is a cleaner, more affordable fuel for Americans. Natural gas produces approximately 25 percent fewer greenhouse gas emissions and significantly fewer criteria air pollutants, and fueling NGVs costs a third less than traditional gasoline. Incentivizing the further build-out of NGV technologies will stop billions of dollars in overseas oil payments, create thousands of jobs, reduce harmful greenhouse gas and criteria air pollutant emissions, and improve the overall health of the United States’ economy.”

On January 19th, the Congressional Research Service (CRS) published a report entitled, [“Displacing Coal with Generation from Existing Natural Gas-Fired Power Plants.”](#) The CRS, for anyone not familiar with the entity, provides non-partisan policy support to the U.S. Congress. When members of Congress need help understanding complex policy issues, they turn to the CRS for its expertise and diverse analytical skills.

The CRS report highlights the immediate and significant emissions reductions that could occur through greater utilization of existing natural gas combined cycle power plants. While the CRS analysis is far from complete, it points to a tangible and cost-effective option for Members of Congress who are focused on reducing energy emissions.

With all the threats our industry is facing, it’s important to also recognize the positive developments occurring on the public policy front.