

# People

*By Mike Wagner*



## Betsy Monseu

*The coal-industry champion says EPA's climate-change approach will backfire.*

**S**EATED IN HER SPARTAN office in the old *Evening Star* building on Pennsylvania Avenue, Betsy Monseu, the CEO of the American Coal Council, is primed for battle. “Coal and fossil fuels have contributed to a very stable economy in this country—stable electric rates and the ability for our manufacturers and businesses to be competitive,” Monseu says. “What happens if these rules get implemented? What happens to manufacturers when their electric rates skyrocket? Well, they’re ... going to go someplace else, which isn’t good for America, and maybe they end up going to a more carbon-intensive economy. That doesn’t contribute to global solutions.”

The rules to which she refers, of course, are those aimed at reducing greenhouse gases from coal-fired power plants, part of the Environmental Protection Agency’s regulatory approach to addressing climate change.

“We’re really talking about managing our whole electric grid in this country differently,” Monseu argues. “That has huge implications. I don’t even think we can understand what all those implications are right now.”

Monseu says that the planned controls on carbon emissions, combined with regulations for other airborne emissions already on the books, will likely cause a one-third reduction in U.S. coal-generating capacity, which currently accounts for 40 percent of the nation’s electricity. “That’s huge,” she says. “It has major impacts, obviously, on the industry. But it will also have significant, huge impacts as far as our economy, as far as American families and manufacturers and businesses who consume electricity.”

Monseu, 57, seems well suited to lead the American Coal Council, which has about 165 members “covering the entire coal-value chain—mining companies, coal suppliers, transportation companies who handle coal, and coal-support services, including legal firms, consultants, and so on,” she says. Monseu has worked in most of those sectors.

After growing up in Springfield, Illinois, and graduating from Illinois College in nearby Jacksonville, Monseu started her career in budgeting, planning, and fuel-purchasing for Central Illinois Public Service. She moved to Denver with her husband in 1990 and went to work for the Southern Pacific Railroad as manager of coal-market development, gaining experience on the transportation side of the industry. In 1994, she got into the mining business with Cyprus Amax Coal, which later became Foundation Coal and then Alpha Natural Resources.

In May 2013, Monseu moved to the American Coal Council, succeeding Janet Gellici, who had led the organization for 30 years. “Literally within weeks after I came on board, President Obama spoke at Georgetown and set out his climate action plan,” Monseu says. “So that really set the stage for our view of how we should spend our time and focus our resources.”

Climate-change regulations aren’t the only issue facing the coal industry, she notes, but they are certainly “the most pressing issue.”

Monseu believes that EPA’s “prescriptive” approach—giving the states limited choices for achieving carbon-reduction targets—should be replaced with one that encourages new technologies that would enable the country to better use one of its most abundant natural resources. “These rules actually inhibit that technology development,” she says. “What company is going to be able or be financed to take on those kinds of projects? In an environment where coal use is declining, we’re not building new generation, and are retiring existing generation. That’s a self-defeating approach, in our opinion, and we would greatly prefer to see support for innovative technologies.”

Monseu doesn’t deny that climate change needs to be addressed, but she believes the energy industry, with the right incentives, can find solutions.

“As I think about this from the standpoint of being a parent, and having kids who are getting ready to make their way in the world, I want them to be able to obtain good jobs,” she says. “And the energy industry has been a great place to have a job in this country.” ♦

(Photos by Chet Susslin)

#### INTEREST GROUPS

### Paul Kealey *National Low Income Housing Coalition*



**O**NE OF THE MOST overlooked issues in Washington is the housing crisis facing poor Americans; there is a shortage of 7 million units for the nation’s lowest-income citizens, says Paul Kealey, newly installed as chief operating officer at the National Low Income Housing Coalition.

Kealey, 57, joined the coalition in June, after 12 years with NeighborWorks America, which supports community groups. Before that, the Fairfield, Connecticut, native spent nearly 12 years in the Peace Corps, two years with the World Wildlife Fund (as director of operations in Latin America

and the Caribbean), and two years at the Corporation for National and Community Service, also known as AmeriCorps/VISTA. Now he is focused entirely on “promoting socially just public policy, so people with the lowest incomes have safe, affordable homes,” Kealey says. “This situation is dire and just getting worse. ... For every one [unit] built for affordable housing, two are coming off the market. And since the financial collapse, rents have been rising.”

#### LOBBY SHOPS

### Becky Blood *Wexler & Walker*



**B**ECKY BLOOD knew she wanted to get into public policy after growing up in Three Rivers, Michigan, and graduating from Michigan State University. So in the early 1980s, she went to work for home-state Sen. Carl Levin, and later for then-Rep. Phil Sharp of Indiana, both Democrats. Sharp’s work on the House Energy and Commerce Committee sparked in Blood a career-long

interest in energy issues, she says. Blood joined the staff of Democratic Gov. Richard Celeste of Ohio in 1985 and spent six years working on environmental issues for the state. She then went into lobbying for municipal utilities, the American Public Power Association, hydropower companies, and other clean-energy providers. Now 57, Blood moved this spring to Wexler & Walker, the first lobbying

firm in Washington founded by women (Anne Wexler and Gail Harrison) and led today by former Rep. Robert Walker, a Pennsylvania Republican. Blood says she’ll continue to work on clean-energy issues, including hydroelectricity and nuclear power.



#### ELECTIONEERS

### Betsy Mullins *The Woman’s Campaign Fund*

**T**HE WOMEN’S CAMPAIGN FUND has a new president and CEO, Betsy Mullins, who brings with her a wealth of experience on Capitol Hill, in the White House, at the Energy Department, with the Democratic Governors Association, and in public-affairs firms. Mullins, 45,

grew up in Cincinnati and worked as a reporter in Florida, but was driven to move to Washington after President Clinton took office in 1993, she says. She worked in communications for the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, for Sen. Jack Reed of Rhode Island, and for then-Rep. Vic Fazio of California before joining Vice President Al Gore’s staff in 1999.

That led to positions serving Bill Richardson when he was Energy secretary and later when he was governor of New Mexico, in between stints at Vote for America, the Dixon/Davis Media Group, SS+K, TechNet, and her own firm, P3 Public Affairs. At the WCF, Mullins will work to get more women elected at all levels of government. “We’re still the most underrepresented segment of the American public, with 18 percent” of elective offices nationwide, she says, “and we’re half the population.”