



News Release

EESI Commemorates 40 Years of Climate Action

September 29, 2023—Exactly 40 years ago today, the first board of directors of the Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI) convened in Washington, D.C., to set an ambitious agenda to educate policymakers about environmental, energy, and climate change topics. Former Rep. Richard L. "Dick" Ottinger (D-N.Y.) was elected to serve as the first chair of the board along with former Rep. Thomas B. Evans (R-Del.) as vice-chair. Mr. Ottinger still serves on the EESI board of directors as the organization's Chair Emeritus.

"I am so intensely proud that the organization I co-founded and led is still going strong today," said EESI Chair Emeritus Dick Ottinger. "Everyone who has contributed to EESI over these 40 years has made a positive impact on U.S. climate action. EESI was one of the earliest leaders in examining environmental and energy policies through a climate change lens. I am confident that EESI is positioned to continue to make our world more sustainable and meet the challenges of the climate crisis."

While in Congress, Mr. Ottinger co-founded the **Environmental and Energy Study Conference, EESI's forerunner**. The Conference was Congress's largest legislative service organization at the time, counting 85 senators and 295 representatives as members in 1975. Following a change in Congressional rules, EESI was founded as an independent nonprofit to continue the Conference's work.

A press release released in conjunction with the board meeting announced "the formation of a new non-profit public policy research and analysis organization focusing on national environmental, energy and natural resources legislation." When the board of directors convened, its members set out four priorities: hazardous waste management, groundwater protection, environmental protection in developing countries, and alternative energy development. **EESI's Congressional education work began in earnest in early 1984.**

"During the past four decades, EESI has strived to be the source of nonpartisan, science-based information that Congress needs to protect the environment, improve human health and wellbeing, and promote sustainable paths to prosperity for everyone," said EESI Board Chair Jared Blum, who has served on the board of directors since 1999 and as chair since 2010. "We've elevated pressing climate issues on the national agenda. We've informed policy debates in Congress with objective analyses and creative ideas. And we've injected balance and even-handed thinking into climate change conversations that can get contentious at times. **Our work is far from done. And with the consistent support of those who care about these critical issues, this hard work will continue into the years and decades ahead.**"

Highlights from the September 29, 1983, Press Release

"We all want to return to the kind of informed, non-partisan debate that has produced a remarkable degree of consensus on protecting the environment."
—EESI Chair Rep. Richard L. "Dick" Ottinger (D-N.Y.)

"The Republican Party has a long and proud history of environmental protection. The environment is not a partisan issue, and the Institute will continue the non-partisan tradition that has characterized the debate since the days of Teddy Roosevelt."
—EESI Vice-Chair Rep. Thomas B. Evans (R-Del.)

"We will be celebrating four tremendous decades of EESI all throughout 2024," said **EESI President Daniel Bresette**. "When EESI's board of directors met 40 years ago today, they knew they were doing something important and impactful. We have covered a lot of ground since then, even **branching out to help make clean energy more affordable and accessible in rural communities**. I am looking forward to this trip down memory lane because EESI's heritage is a reminder that we can work together for the common good. I hope that inspires us to keep at it and meet the climate challenges before us."

For more information, please contact Amaury Laporte at alaporte@eesi.org or (202) 662-1884.

***The Environmental and Energy Study Institute** (www.eesi.org) is an independent nonprofit advancing science-based solutions for climate change, energy, and environmental challenges. Founded on a bipartisan basis by members of Congress, EESI has been informing policymakers and the American public about the benefits of energy efficiency, renewable energy, and environmental protection since 1984. In 1988, EESI declared that all energy policy must be examined through a climate lens, which has since guided us toward our vision: a sustainable, resilient, and equitable world. EESI receives no congressional funding and is supported through contributions and grants.*