

Kelly Knutsen, PhD, Chemistry, University of California at Berkeley

2009-2010 AAAS Congressional Science and Engineering Fellow®; Office of Senator Mark Udall (D-CO)

As a sophomore chemistry major at Carleton College, Kelly Knutsen came across a brochure about the AAAS Science & Technology Policy Fellowships at his campus career center. Intrigued, he signed up for a political science class and soon realized he could combine two of his interests, chemistry and policy. Kelly didn't know it then, but he had just taken the first steps toward an exciting career in science policy.

He continued his chemistry education with a doctorate at UC Berkeley, and then took a postdoc appointment at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory in Colorado, investigating solar cell materials. On the side, he pursued his ongoing policy interests, assisting with energy-related issues in the Denver office of Senator Ken Salazar (D-CO). This led to a job with Utah Clean Energy focusing on economic development through renewable energy and energy efficiency policies for Utah. Nearly 12 years later, when Barack Obama was elected U.S. President, Kelly decided it was the time to make his move to Washington, D.C. And, he hadn't forgotten about the S&T Policy Fellowships.

Kelly served his AAAS Congressional Fellowship in the Office of Senator Mark Udall (D-CO). Drawing from his previous experience, he helped convene an Energy Jobs Summit in Colorado in February 2010, with Secretary of

Energy Steven Chu as the keynote speaker. Colorado was already a model state for economic development through clean energy policies; its renewable electricity standard had helped create 20,000 new jobs. The goal of the summit was to explore additional ways Senator Udall could partner with Colorado communities to create jobs and to examine concrete measures that would strengthen the clean energy economy in Colorado. The event led to several key pieces of legislation, including the Solar Uniting Neighborhoods Act, the Streamlining Energy Efficiency for Schools Act, and the Electric Consumer Right to Know Act, or e-KNOW. Kelly led those efforts and it was his role to write drafts, coordinate with agencies, recruit bill cosponsors, prepare for potential hearings, and continue to garner stakeholder support.

"While the Senate didn't pass a comprehensive energy and climate bill during my fellowship year, a number of good strategies were pursued that can inform future legislation," Kelly noted. "Those efforts also helped establish Senator Udall's strong leadership on energy issues in the Senate."

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Kelly was a fully integrated member of Senator Udall's office as a

Fellow and served on the energy team. He was given opportunities to lead on many issues and to provide backup on other projects, allowing him to reap a broad range of skills and experience.

"It was an exciting and rewarding year," Kelly

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emphasized, and it enticed him to stick around. Kelly is now a legislative assistant in the Office of Senator Jack Reed (D-RI), where he continues to focus on energy, and to make connections between chemistry and policy.

