

Published on *American Geosciences Institute* (<https://www.americangeosciences.org>)

Home > House forms bipartisan caucus to bring attention to Arctic policy

---

## House forms bipartisan caucus to bring attention to Arctic policy

August 5, 2014

Rep. Rick Larsen (D-WA) and Rep. Don Young (R-AK) recently announced the formation of a new bipartisan caucus designed to bring more attention to Arctic issues in Congress. The caucus, called the Congressional Arctic Working Group (CAWG), also aims to secure U.S. interests in the region.

The move to create the caucus comes a year before the United States prepares to take over the chairmanship of the Arctic Council in 2015. The Council serves as a voluntary intergovernmental organization of Arctic States and indigenous groups who work together to address economic and environmental needs relating to the Arctic. The caucus intends to improve the effectiveness of U.S. involvement in the Council in the wake of a report from the Government Accountability Office (GAO) highlighting the United States' lack of a clear strategy and resources for the Council.

Rep. Larsen stressed the need for the United States to shift focus to the Arctic, pointing out that other countries have already begun successfully navigating the Arctic waters for research and economic purposes. Rep. Young echoed those sentiments and emphasized the need to consider Alaskan Native priorities.

Congress most recently considered Arctic policy in a House Transportation Committee hearing titled "Implementing U.S. Policy in the Arctic" and in a bill introduced by Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner (R-WI) that would establish an Ambassador at Large for Arctic Affairs.

Sources: E&E News, Government Accountability Office, Representative Rick Larsen

---