



ARA STAFF



Vice President of Legislative Policy & Counsel

Richard Gupton, possessing more than 14 years of public policy and legal experience, serves as ARA's vice president of legislative policy and counsel. Gupton represents the Ag retailers' and distributors' interests before the legislative and executive branches of government, working to ensure that important Ag retail-distribution issues receive fair consideration on Capitol Hill and with federal agencies. Gupton's issue areas of expertise include: agriculture, chemical security, banking and credit, conservation programs, telecommunications, high-tech, energy, transportation, and trade. He also manages ARAPAC, the association's political action committee.

Prior to joining ARA, Gupton served as deputy director of agricultural finance for the Independent Community of Bankers of America (ICBA). In that capacity, Gupton represented the interests of community banks before Congress and the Administration. He filled leadership roles on the House Republican Policy Subcommittee on Environment, Resources and the Agriculture Advisory Board. In addition, he contributed articles regularly to the *Washington Weekly Report* and *Independent Banker* magazine.

Before ICBA, Gupton served as subcommittee staff director and counsel for Senator Paul Coverdell's (R-GA) Agriculture Committee. To his credit, Gupton served as the senator's primary negotiator for the Agricultural Research and Education Reform Act of 1998, created comprehensive food safety legislation and managed the legislative effort to reform USDA loan programs. In addition, Gupton served as legislative counsel for Congressman Fred Heineman (R-NC) and as a law clerk for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Office of General Counsel in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Gupton is a graduate of Campbell University's Norman Adrian Wiggins School of Law, and holds a bachelor's degree in history from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He is licensed to practice law in North Carolina and the District of Columbia.