



Policy Resolutions

AGRICULTURE

Resolution 2017-09: Western Agriculture Western Governors support a broad array of funding, education, research, and conservation programs that enable farms, forests, and rangelands to be important contributors to the economies and quality of life in western states. The Governors encourage responsible management of federal lands in the West, given that western states include more than 75 percent of our national forest and rangeland ecosystems. Western Governors encourage integrating these policies into legislative action as Congress considers the 2018 Farm Bill.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Policy Resolution 2018-13: Workforce Development in the Western United States Western Governors, based on the findings of the 2017-18 *Workforce Development Initiative*, encourage better alignment among workforce development, career and technical education, and higher education programs. Governors also emphasize expanded career pathways for students, working adults and jobseekers, including short-term education and training programs, as well as work-based learning programs such as apprenticeships.

Policy Resolution 2018-14: International Trade International trade, particularly with Canada and Mexico, is a crucial economic driver in the West. Western Governors emphasize the need for stable and predictable international trade policies. This also recognizes the need to modernize multi-lateral trade agreements, such as NAFTA, but urges that any final changes not impede citizens' ability to compete in global markets or harm our overall economic competitiveness.

Policy Resolution 2016-02: Foreign Visitor

Preclearance Western Governors enacted this resolution to support expanded use of air preclearance operations at foreign airports to streamline legitimate international travel, further protect the safety and security of American citizens and international travelers, and ease burdens placed on small or rural airports that accept a significant number of international travelers.

ENERGY

Policy Resolution 2018-04, Energy in the West

In 2016, Western Governors adopted the policy resolution, "Energy and Transmission," which set forth an all-of-the-above approach to energy and recognized different approaches among states and territories to energy use and development. The updated resolution sets forth revised energy policy priorities for the West, including priorities regarding alternative vehicles, energy storage, grid resiliency and cybersecurity. It also directs WGA staff to consult with the Western Interstate Energy Board to recommend updates to the "10-Year Energy Vision."

Policy Resolution 2018-07: Enhanced Oil Recovery

Enhanced Oil Recovery (EOR) contributes to our nation's energy and fiscal security by reducing dependence on foreign oil. It provides a long-term path for low-carbon use of coal and oil resources and transforms carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions into a valuable commodity. The Governors also advocate for increasing CO₂ capture at power plants and allowing states to tailor the regulation of EOR to their individual economies, industries and needs.

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

[Policy Resolution 2018-05: Air Quality and Methane](#)

Emissions Regulation Western states have the authority to manage air quality within their borders. This resolution provides Governors' recommendations to improve the state-federal relationship in the regulation of air quality and methane emissions, ozone regulation, exceptional events, regional haze, and wildfire and prescribed fire. The Governors, for example, advocate for improved tools that encourage the use of prescribed fire, managed as part of state air quality programs, to reduce the air quality impacts of uncharacteristic wildfire in the West.

[Policy Resolution 2018-15: Modernizing Western](#)

Infrastructure Western Governors support more efficient infrastructure permitting and environmental review processes without shortening timelines for state input and consultation or compromising natural resource, environmental or cultural values. Early and meaningful state consultation will help prevent delays, reduce duplication, and streamline the infrastructure process. The Governors also recommend that the federal government encourage joint National Environmental Policy Act reviews with states.

[Policy Resolution 2018-10: Transportation, Storage and Disposal of Radioactive Waste, Radioactive Materials](#)

and Spent Nuclear Fuel Western Governors support the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) safe transport of radioactive materials, accomplished through DOE's compliance with federal radioactive waste transport safety requirements and early coordination and effective communication with state, tribal and local governments. This also affirms that no radioactive waste storage or disposal facility should be located within the geographic boundaries of a western state or U.S. territory without the written consent of the Governor.

[Policy Resolution 2017-07: The Regulation of Coal](#)

Combustion Residuals Western Governors agree with the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) assessment in 2015 that coal combustion residuals (CCRs) should be regulated as non-hazardous waste under subtitle D of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. Western Governors support safe, beneficial use of CCRs and call on EPA to work with states and stakeholders to develop a national framework for advancing beneficial use.

FOREST & RANGELAND MANAGEMENT

[Policy Resolution 2018-01, Wild Horse and Burro](#)

Management: In 2015, Western Governors adopted the policy resolution, "Wild Horse and Burro Management." It noted the demand on federal agencies to adequately manage wild horse and burro populations and supported thoughtful and science-based herd management decisions. The updated resolution includes more current estimates of the growing number of wild horses and burros on BLM- and USFS-managed rangelands in the West, highlighting how herd populations continue to grow beyond the established Appropriate Management Levels.

[Policy Resolution 2018-02, Public Lands Grazing](#)

In 2015, Western Governors adopted the policy resolution, "Public Lands Grazing," which expressed the Governors' response to the reduction or removal of domestic livestock from federal lands and their support for sound, science-based management decisions for federal lands. This updated resolution incorporates language on the importance of targeted grazing as a tool to achieve restoration and land management goals and on alternative allotments authorized by the BLM and USFS.

[Policy Resolution 2017-10: National Forest and](#)

Rangeland Management In 2016, the Governors initially adopted this resolution in support of sound forest and rangeland management policies that maintain and promote environmental, economic and social balance and sustainability for rural communities. The resolution also signaled support for programs intended to reduce wildfire risk and improve forest health and resilience. The resolution has been updated to incorporate the Recommendations included in the [first-year report](#) of the [National Forest and Rangeland Management Initiative](#).

[Policy Resolution 2017-03: Tax-Exempt Federal Lands and Secure Rural Schools](#)

The federal government must honor its historic Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILT) agreement with states and counties in the West to compensate them for tax-exempt federal lands within their borders. Predictable and adequate payments under PILT and Secure Rural Schools' programs are vital to providing state and county public goods

and services, such as roads, emergency response, and wildlife and natural resources protection. The payments should not be subject to federal sequestration.

Policy Resolution 2017-02: States' Share of Royalties and Leasing Revenues from Federal Lands and Minerals and States' Role in Associated Federal Policy

The federal government has codified in law several historic agreements and programs to compensate western states for costs associated with the presence of tax exempt federal lands within their borders. The federal government must honor its statutory obligations to share royalty and lease payments with states and counties. States also should be provided meaningful and substantial opportunities for consultation in the development of federal policy affecting those revenues.

Policy Resolution 2016-04: Federal-State Land Exchanges and Purchases

Federal land ownership in western states is prolific and often occurs interspersed with state, county, and private land, which complicates resource management. Western Governors call on Congress to simplify and expedite the federal-state land exchange, sale and conveyance processes to resolve the checkerboard land tenure issue in the West.

MINING

Policy Resolution 2018-11: Cleaning Up Abandoned Mines in the West

Western Governors call on Congress to protect "Good Samaritans" that voluntarily clean up abandoned mines from potential liability under the Clean Water Act, CERCLA and RCRA. This also enunciates the Governors' support for pilot projects if comprehensive legislation is not possible and provides recommendations for Good Samaritan remediation plans, permitting, reviews, and approvals that will facilitate voluntary cleanup.

Policy Resolution 2018-09: National Minerals Policy

Western Governors support building on the 1970 Mining and Minerals Policy Act with legislation and policies that unlock our mineral potential and ensure access to metals critical to U.S. economic and national security, in part by addressing the critical issue of permitting delays and the timely processing of mining permit applications.

Policy Resolution 2017-06: Financial Assurance Regulation

Reclamation of western mines and facilities managed by other industries is needed primarily to protect adjacent waters. It is therefore appropriate and consistent with Congressional intent to recognize the states' primary role in regulating impact of facility reclamation – including associated financial assurance requirements. Western Governors believe that states have financial assurance regulatory programs in place that are working well and they should not be preempted or duplicated by any EPA program.

WATER

Policy Resolution 2018-12: Water Quality in the West

The federal government must provide adequate funding and tools to assist states' compliance with federal water quality and drinking water requirements. The Governors also advocate for federal deference to states' primary authority over water management and allocation within their borders.

Policy Resolution 2018-08: Water Resource Management in the West

Governors assert that states have primary authority over water management and allocation, and that federal investment is critical to water infrastructure needs. Governors also encourage effective partnerships between state, federal, tribal and local governments; reliable and up-to-date water resource information; and drought preparedness and response.

STATE-FEDERAL RELATIONSHIP

Policy Resolution 2018-03, Federal Disaster Recovery Assistance for Communities in the West

In 2015, Western Governors adopted the policy resolution, "Federal Disaster Recovery Assistance for Communities in the West," which advocated for federal recovery aid for major natural disasters, especially wildfires. It also noted the important role of the federal government in helping communities and states in long-term recovery. This updated resolution, among other things, emphasizes the need for adequate and flexible funding of individual and public assistance programs, as well as fire management grant assistance and a federal focus on disaster mitigation.

[Policy Resolution 2017-01: Building a Stronger State-Federal Relationship](#) In the absence of Constitutional delegation of authority to the federal government, state authority should be presumed sovereign. Each executive department and agency should have a clear and accountable process to provide states with early, meaningful and substantive input in the development of regulatory policies. Where authority has been delegated by the federal government to the states, states should be granted the maximum administrative discretion possible and should be treated as co-regulators. It is time for a thoughtful review of the extant Executive Order on Federalism. Governors support the reestablishment of the U.S. Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations.

[Policy Resolution 2016-10: National Parks and the West](#) On the 100th anniversary of the National Parks System, Western Governors recognized the importance of National Parks in preserving unique natural treasures, providing recreational opportunities, and contributing to local and state economies throughout the United States. The Governors also expressed their support of efforts to educate and encourage the next generation of park users, including the “Find Your Park” and “Every Kid in a Park” Initiatives.

SPECIES MANAGEMENT

[Policy Resolution 2017-11: Species Conservation and the Endangered Species Act](#) Western Governors’ adopted the original “Species Conservation and the Endangered Species Act” resolution in 2016 as an expression of their principles for improving voluntary species conservation efforts and the efficacy of the ESA. In 2017, the Governors adopted this updated Resolution, which incorporates by reference the Initiative’s Year Two Recommendations for implementing the policy principles in the Resolution through statutory, regulatory/administrative, and funding-related avenues

[Policy Resolution 2017-08: State Wildlife Science, Data and Analysis](#) Western Governors direct U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service to utilize state wildlife data, analysis and expertise as principal sources in development and analysis of

science serving as the legal basis for federal regulatory action to manage species and habitat. The Governors support efforts to provide statutory exceptions to Freedom of Information Act disclosure for state wildlife data and analysis in instances where publication of state data provided to federal agencies would be in violation of existing state statutes.

[Policy Resolution 2016-05: Combating Invasive Species](#) Western Governors support coordinated invasive species management including early detection and rapid response programs to ensure that actions result in more on-the-ground prevention, management and eradication. Governors also call for increased accountability and oversight of federal invasive species programs and support the creation of a West-wide species inventory, including the development of data management standards, formats and protocols.

WILDFIRES

[Policy Resolution 2016-06: Wildland Fire Management and Resilient Landscapes 2016](#) Western Governors call on Congress and the Administration to address issues that would mitigate wildfire danger in western states and promote healthy forests and rangelands. The Governors call upon Congress and the Administration to address the issue of “fire borrowing,” to fully implement the FLAME Act, to accomplish the goals of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy, and to take advantage of current authorities to expedite projects that would improve western ecosystems and reduce extreme wildfire danger.

TRANSPORTATION

[Policy Resolution 2018-06: Transportation Infrastructure in the Western United States](#) New multimodal systems, including high-speed passenger rail and transit systems, are important to the West’s transportation infrastructure. This resolution emphasizes the importance of a long-term federal funding mechanism for the maintenance and expansion of surface transportation networks.

Contact: Joe Rassenfoss, Communications Director

1600 Broadway, Suite 1700

Denver, CO 80202 • 303.623.9378

westgov.org

