



**CORRECTED PRESS RELEASE:
Western Governors have wide-ranging discussion
with Secretaries of Interior, Ag on key issues**

Please note: the quote for Gov. Gregoire in a press release sent at 12:45 p.m. today was incorrect. The corrected quote is below. Please disregard the earlier version of this release.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 28, 2011

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- In a meeting with the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture this weekend, Western Governors discussed a wide range of issues and emphasized the need to restore Western forests severely damaged by beetle kill and wildfire while creating jobs in the process.

The governors urged improved cooperation on large-scale forest restoration, which can and should provide predictable supplies of forest products, including woody biomass for energy production.

"Restoring the nation's forests will reduce the severity of wildfires and create much needed revenue for rural economies," said Idaho Gov. C. L. "Butch" Otter, Chair of the Western Governors' Association. "By making this a priority, we can significantly reduce the long-term cost of wildfire, including impacts to watersheds, ecosystems, infrastructure and local economies."

Secretary of Interior Ken Salazar and Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack also addressed issues related to the management of public lands and wildlife, energy development, transmission and the national farm bill.

"We had a very productive and candid exchange of views on the issues raised," said Gov. Christine Gregoire (Wash.), WGA's Vice Chair. "Cooperation and coordination between states and the federal government is always important -- but even more so today given tighter state and federal budgets. The secretaries understand this imperative and clearly want to work in partnership with Western governors."

Governors are seeking coordinated approaches with federal agencies in:

- expediting the review of proposed transmission projects aimed at bringing online promising renewable energy resources;
- using data states are developing with sophisticated, new mapping tools in order to identify and better manage wildlife habitat and corridors; and

More information on WGA programs related to forest management, energy and wildlife can be found on WGA's Web site at www.westgov.org.

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