



## WESTERN GOVERNORS' ASSOCIATION

C.L. "Butch" Otter  
Governor of Idaho  
Chairman

Christine O. Gregoire  
Governor of Washington  
Vice Chair

Pam O. Inmann  
Executive Director

Headquarters:  
1600 Broadway  
Suite 1700  
Denver, CO 80202

303-623-9378  
Fax 303-534-7309

Washington, D.C. Office:  
400 N. Capitol Street, N.W.  
Suite 388  
Washington, D.C. 20001

202-624-5402  
Fax 202-624-7707

[www.westgov.org](http://www.westgov.org)

September 1, 2010

The Honorable Ken Salazar  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W., Room 6151  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Salazar:

We are writing to seek your assistance in implementing the June 2009 Memorandum of Understanding among you, Secretary Vilsack, Secretary Chu and the Western Governors, concerning wildlife corridors and crucial habitat (attached). The primary objective of that MOU is to support the development of state-based, spatial decision support systems (DSS) that provide landscape-scale wildlife information across political boundaries in the West, and to coordinate this state effort with complementary federal initiatives. Once these DSSs are completed and wildlife data is made compatible across the region, the public and governments will have a powerful new tool to do the necessary planning for projects, such as transmission lines, natural gas extraction, renewable energy projects, transportation projects and conservation initiatives.

During the Western Governors' Association annual meeting in June, we reaffirmed our long-standing commitment to complete within three years these regionally compatible wildlife DSSs in each state. To meet this ambitious goal, the Western Governors' Wildlife Council is in the midst of launching, with funding from the Department of Energy, eight pilot projects to identify and map crucial wildlife habitat and corridors across political boundaries in the West. At the same time, the Department of the Interior is embarking on ambitious landscape-scale mapping and science efforts through its initiatives for Landscape Conservation Cooperatives, Rapid Ecoregional Assessments, and Regional Climate Science Centers. We understand that these federal efforts will provide necessary information about our nation's natural resources, and we firmly believe it is in our mutual interest – particularly in these difficult budget times – to avoid duplication of effort, make efficient use of limited state and federal resources, and ensure complimentary and compatible end products. Our MOU with you was crafted for this purpose and why your attention is now vital to its full and effective implementation.

The Honorable Ken Salazar  
September 1, 2010  
Page 2

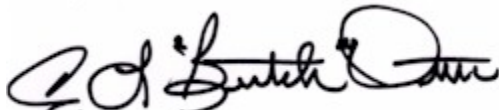
To date, the Western Governors' Wildlife Council has formed a State-Federal Implementation Group to begin implementing the MOU, with participation from the Departments of Agriculture, Energy and the Interior. This group has initiated communication between state and federal efforts at the agency level; however, greater alignment of activities within DOI is necessary for this group to be effective.

We respectfully request that you seek greater integration of the LCC, REA and CSC efforts to ensure greater alignment and coordination with the states' initiatives, consistent with our MOU. The DOI agencies should act in greater concert concerning the purposes of each initiative, simplify and consolidate data requests to states, and synchronize timelines and review efforts of those initiatives with state goals, staffing requirements and funding needs. These actions will assist states that are challenged by multiple requests from DOI agencies as they simultaneously participate in multiple LCCs and REAs.

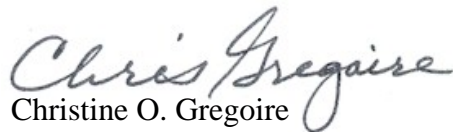
WGA is willing to host a meeting or series of meetings with appropriate state and policy-level DOI representatives for the purpose of clearly articulating the common goals of these very similar initiatives. The outcome of this meeting would be the creation of a clear process for mutual support among initiatives, timelines for sharing and integrating work products, the consideration of staffing limits, as well as efficient completion of our mutual goals. Such a meeting and ongoing high-level communications will be necessary to ensure continued alignment between the state and federal agencies and to provide the best possible public service.

Thank you for your consideration. Western Governors are committed to working closely with you as energy development and natural resources management becomes even more critical to our nation's future, and as new technology allows governments and private sectors to gather, display and use information at a scope and scale not previously undertaken. We look forward to your continued assistance and support.

Sincerely,



C. L. "Butch" Otter  
Governor of Idaho  
Chairman, WGA



Christine O. Gregoire  
Governor of Washington  
Vice Chair, WGA

Enclosure