



## WESTERN GOVERNORS' ASSOCIATION

Christine O. Gregoire  
Governor of Washington  
Chair

Gary R. Herbert  
Governor of Utah  
Vice Chairman

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)

March 13, 2012

The Honorable John Bryson  
Secretary  
U.S. Commerce Department  
1401 Constitution Ave N.W.  
Washington, DC 20230

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

Dear Secretary Bryson and Secretary Salazar:


We are writing in support of the attached comments the Western States Tourism Policy Council (Council) submitted to the Task Force on Travel and Competitiveness on the development of a National Travel and Tourism Strategy.

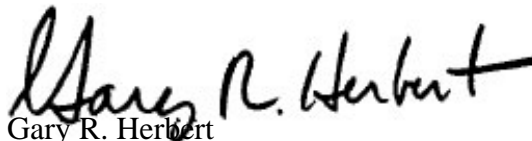
You will find the Council's comments informative, focusing on strategies for enhancing the capacity of federal lands to increase tourism-related travel and provide jobs and income in neighboring rural communities. We support their comments and the inclusion of these ideas into a national travel and tourism strategy.

Given that much of the West's tourism is driven by outdoor recreation on lands and landscapes owned and managed by federal and state agencies, we also strongly encourage the Task Force on Travel and Competitiveness to coordinate the development of its travel and tourism strategy with the work of the Federal Interagency Council on Outdoor Recreation created last May. Attached are comments we submitted to FICOR last month with more ideas with respect to cooperation with states.

Successfully increasing travel, tourism and outdoor recreation in the West requires cooperation and seamless integration of all of our efforts and we look forward to working in partnership.

Sincerely,

  
Christine O. Gregoire  
Governor, State of Washington  
Chair

  
Gary R. Herbert  
Governor, State of Utah  
Vice Chair

cc: Secretary Tom Vilsack, U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Jennifer Pilat, U.S. Department of Commerce,  
International Trade Administration

Enclosures

**A STRATEGY FOR ENHANCING THE CAPACITY OF FEDERAL LANDS TO  
INCREASE TRAVEL AND INCREASE JOBS**

**COMMENTS SUBMITTED BY THE WESTERN STATES TOURISM POLICY COUNCIL**

**TO THE PRESIDENTIAL TASK FORCE ON TRAVEL AND COMPETITIVENESS  
ESTABLISHED BY EXECUTIVE ORDER 13597**

Few Federal policies and actions will have a more immediate, direct and significant positive impact on the capacity of travel and tourism to increase substantially the number of jobs supported by the industry in the United States than a carefully constructed strategy regarding our national parks, forests and other Federal lands that are already experienced and enjoyed by millions of domestic and international visitors and with wise and responsible actions will provide still greater benefits for many more visitors.

The following recommendations are submitted by the Western States Tourism Policy Council. The WSTPC is a consortium of twelve western State Tourism Offices, including the States of Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Wyoming and Washington. The mission of the WSTPC is to support public policies that enhance the capacity of travel and tourism in the West to have a positive economic impact on States and communities.

These recommendations outline the elements of a strategy to achieve a significant increase in jobs and economic development in the travel and tourism industry in the West and in the nation in both the short term and the long term.

**A. Recommendations for Short Term (summer 2012 and 2013) Results**

1. Develop an intensive 12 Months International Federal Lands Marketing Campaign to increase international visitation to national parks, working closely with Brand USA and State Tourism Offices, with the following elements as possible elements of the campaign:
  - a. Greater presence and participation of Federal lands agencies at Pow Wow -- the most significant international trade show for generating international visitors to the U.S. -- to deliver the message that America's public lands are open for business, such as through dedicated booth(s) on the trade show floor and/or an interagency "visitors center" -- an expanded version of the well received America's National Parks Visitors Center erected in the vestibule off the main trade show floor at the last two Pow Wows;
  - b. Participation by Secretary Salazar and Secretary Vilsack in the 2012 International Pow Wow in Los Angeles;
  - c. Similar cabinet level participation on behalf of the U.S. at the World Travel Mart in England and ITB in Germany, the largest global travel trade shows;
  - d. Review of how Federal lands can become more welcoming and hospitable to international visitors, including the need for more multi-lingual signage and interpretation programs;

2. Review implementation of the America the Beautiful Pass with private sector tourism organizations to ensure it is meeting the needs of domestic and international travelers;
3. Work with industry to expand and increase the utility of Rec.Gov to include current data on recreation sites managed by Federal agencies and make this information portable to all public and private sites as a database (as appropriate and allowable by law);
4. Direct all Federal lands agencies to give highest priority to developing and implementing short term cooperative programs with State Tourism Offices, regional and local destination marketing organizations and gateway communities to promote the lands.

**B. Recommendations for Long Term (5-10 years) Results**

1. National Park Service should implement its 2009 National Tourism Strategic Plan (modified in 2011), but never provided with sufficient resources for implementation;
2. National Park Service should elevate the organizational status of its Office of Sustainable Tourism and provide it with sufficient staff and resources to implement the National Tourism Strategic Plan (NOTE: Consideration might be given to expanding the mission of this office to make it, for example, the Office of Tourism, Education and Visitation. The newly expanded office would then embrace public outreach, including community relations, tourism development, marketing and promotion. Such reorganization should be done, however, only if it increases the resources and capability of the NPS tourism function and does not dilute this function.)
3. National Park Service policies regarding filming on the national parks should be reformed to remove unnecessary restrictions in order to facilitate responsible, environmentally sensitive cinematic and video productions that will encourage more visits to the national parks.
4. Establish strong Tourism Offices in all Federal lands agencies. Every Federal land agency should establish a strong Office of Tourism, with sufficient staff and budget resources to conduct public outreach, including community relations, tourism development, staff training, marketing and promotion. As part of this initiative, the NPS should reexamine its 2009 National Parks Tourism Strategy, modify it as appropriate and commit sufficient resources to implement it effectively.
5. The Federal Interagency Committee on Recreation (FICOR) should be given expanded authority to develop and coordinate the execution of a national strategy for promoting tourism and recreation on the Federal lands with the establishment of a new Office of Federal Lands Tourism in the Department of the Interior to work closely with FICOR.

6. Clarify administratively or, if necessary, by Congressional action that Federal land agencies can, within current budgets, work and cooperate with State Tourism Offices, regional and local DMOs, other non-profit organizations, gateway businesses and others in the tourism industry to market and promote those lands domestically and internationally. While it can be argued that this authority exists now, too many land managers do not agree and resist notions of marketing and promotion.
7. The NPS and other Federal lands agencies should develop alternative, nonappropriated revenue sources for funding marketing and promotion, such as some combination of a percentage of concession fees, entrance fees (only from the 20% of fee revenue that is not retained by individual parks) and sales of the America the Beautiful Pass);
8. The NPS and other Federal lands agencies should repackage their product categories to make their appeal clearer to the public, such as: (a) cultural-heritage, (b) natural-scenic, (c) recreation, (d) historic events and common themes (CW 150) and geotourism along regional corridors.

For further information about these recommendations or the WSTPC, please contact:

**AUBREY C. KING**  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
**WESTERN STATES TOURISM POLICY COUNCIL**  
**11914 GRASON LANE**  
**BOWIE, MD 20715-4012**  
**O 301.464.8060**  
**F 301.464.5232**  
**C 202.251.6845**  
**AUBKING@AOL.COM**



## WESTERN GOVERNORS' ASSOCIATION

Christine O. Gregoire  
Governor of Washington  
Chair

Gary R. Herbert  
Governor of Utah  
Vice Chairman

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)

February 16, 2012

Bob Abbey  
Director  
U.S. Bureau of Land Management  
1849 C Street NW, Rm. 5665  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Director Abbey:

We write to you in your capacity as chairman of the Federal Interagency Council on Outdoor Recreation (FICOR). We applaud the federal government's efforts to coordinate recreation policies, programs and procedures. FICOR has a historic opportunity to break away from "business as usual" and break down traditional stovepipes that frustrate citizens who want to enjoy our nation's public and private lands for recreation.

We look forward to working with the Council on its recommendations relating to state lands. We believe that people who participate in outdoor recreation do not care whether they are on federal, state, tribal or private land. We should set a goal to work toward a seamless system that integrates federal and state information, permitting, and requirements through joint portals based upon geographic location.

On the FICOR objectives, we offer the following thoughts:

*Coordinate recreation management, access, and policies.* We believe this is crucial to improving the recreation experience. We recognize there are legitimate disagreements on some issues but some policies at the federal level should be harmonized where possible. The goal should be to create consistent, understandable, equitable and common sense policies that encourage responsible recreation.

*Improve conservation and outdoor recreation planning efforts.* We believe this planning should occur in local geographic regions with all landowners and stakeholders at the table. Joint planning can improve outcomes and be more cost-efficient.

*Provide the public with reliable and up-to-date web-based information on outdoor recreation that is easily accessible with modern communication devices.* We agree that making information available on mobile devices for planning and

participating in recreation is an important objective. The private sector has already started filling this need and federal and state governments should work with them rather than compete against them.

*Identify and support interagency demonstration projects.* We support interagency and intergovernmental projects. Again, the goal should be a seamless experience for people enjoying our great outdoors.

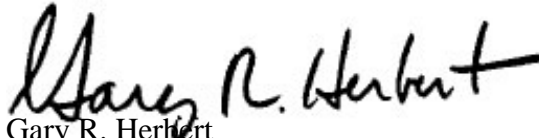
*Improve access and engagement in outdoor recreation and expand opportunities for all Americans.* We applaud the Forest Service's "Discover the Forest" PSA campaign as a mechanism to reach out to the public about getting out into America's great outdoor places. We think there is a great opportunity to work together to elevate and broaden this campaign and would be interested in your thoughts on this idea.

We look forward to FICOR's proposed action items and stand ready to collaborate on implementation of action items where it makes sense.

Sincerely,



Christine O. Gregoire  
Governor, State of Washington  
Chair, Western Governors' Association



Gary R. Herbert  
Governor, State of Utah  
Vice Chair, Western Governors' Association

cc: Tom Vilsack, Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Ken Salazar, Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior