

**Western Governors' Association
Policy Resolution 09-2**

Supporting the Integration of Climate Change Adaptation Science in the West

A. BACKGROUND

1. Global warming poses a serious threat to the Western economy, public health and environment. The impacts of climate change are being observed in Western states and are predicted to worsen in the future. The potential adverse consequences include variability of precipitation leading to serious water supply problems, the degradation of air quality, damage to infrastructure, and the loss of plant and animal species. Global warming will directly affect Western industries including tourism, skiing, fishing, agriculture and forestry and will disproportionately affect communities with limited resources to adapt and cope.
2. Western Governors recognize that while action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions are occurring at the local, state, regional and federal levels of government, simultaneous efforts should be taken to mitigate current and potential future impacts from climate change.
3. Appropriate actions to decrease greenhouse gas emissions must be taken to avoid, reduce and delay the adverse impacts of global warming to Western states. In addition, adaption is necessary to address impacts to Western states from warming which is unavoidable due to past and current emissions.
4. Predictive modeling is being used by decision-makers to mitigate potential economic, social and environmental impacts of climate change and this type of planning data should be encouraged. However, these models are still being developed and their effectiveness for application to natural resource planning should be assessed and implemented appropriately.
5. The Western States Water Council (WSWC) and the Western Governors' Wildlife Council (WGWC) are actively pursuing strategies to identify and adapt to impacts from climate variability on water and wildlife resources, as identified in WGA reports.

B. GOVERNORS' POLICY STATEMENT

1. Western Governors believe that planning for climate change adaptation should be undertaken in a coordinated fashion at all levels of government with state expertise being fully utilized. Such planning must be in cooperation and consultation with the private sector and non-governmental organizations.
2. Western Governors urge Congress and the Administration to fund research to improve predictive capabilities for climate change and related impacts at regional and global levels.

3. Western Governors encourage Congress and the Administration to prioritize investment in federal programs that study climate adaptation, addressing scientific questions, natural resource management, and protection of infrastructure at the regional, state and local levels.
4. Western Governors support the establishment of new revenue streams to support climate adaptation in relevant climate change legislation.
5. Western Governors support streamlined coordination of federal agencies that respond to climate adaptation and greater cooperation with state agencies.
6. Western Governors encourage Congress and the Administration to support the development of a National Climate Service to undertake, coordinate and communicate necessary research and modeling with respect to climate change and adaptation. A National Climate Service should provide relevant decision tools for local and state governments in addressing climate change and adaptation issues, should connect social, health and economic trends to climate change (and vice versa), and should include in its mission public education and outreach.
7. Western Governors agree that results from ongoing scientific research should be assessed and incorporated into policies related to climate change adaptation and greenhouse gas emission reduction strategies. (E.g. as predicted impacts worsen; mitigation efforts should be stepped up).

C. GOVERNORS' MANAGEMENT DIRECTIVE

1. The Western Governors direct WGA staff to establish a Climate Adaptation Work Group (CAWG) for the purpose of determining appropriate uses of climate adaptation modeling in informing natural resource and economic infrastructure planning and policies, and for identifying and filling existing gaps in climate adaptation efforts within WGA. This work group could also review current and future climate legislation to assess the impact to states and their efforts to adapt to a changing climate and report their findings to the WGA Staff Council.
2. Chairs or their designees from existing WGA initiatives will comprise the initial membership of the CAWG. These existing groups include WGA's working groups on water, forest health, wildlife habitat, wildlife corridors and air quality. This initial membership of CAWG will compare efforts, share information and identify gaps in their work as it relates to the broad issues of climate change adaptation at the state and regional levels. The CWAG will report these findings to the WGA Staff Council along with recommendations for the need for, mission and composition of an expanded CWAG.
3. The Western Governors direct WGA staff to conduct a workshop to study current climate change modeling and the application of different models to policy decision-making, using

the North American Regional Climate Change Assessment program as the starting point for consideration.

4. The Western Governors direct WGA staff to work with the CAWG to prepare a report outlining how to more effectively use climate change modeling in policy decision-making.
5. WGA shall post this resolution to its web site to be referred to and transmitted as necessary.