

**Western Governors' Association
Policy Resolution 09-11**

The Restoration Economy

A. BACKGROUND

1. Traditional industries such as agriculture, mining, oil and gas development, and timber production from both public and private lands fueled the economy and growth of the Western United States for much of the last 150 years. These industries continue to play an important role in the region's rapidly diversifying economy.
2. The high quality of life we enjoy in the West is leading to an influx of new businesses that include medical technology, biotechnology, and aerospace industries, as well as finance, real estate, insurance, tourism, recreation, and a significant service sector.
3. Large intact and functioning ecosystems, healthy fish and wildlife populations, and abundant public access to natural landscapes are a significant contributing factor to the West's economic and in-migration boom.
4. Realizing the importance of the environment to the economy as well as our responsibility to future generations, Western states have enacted many state-level policies to restore past damages from resource extraction industries. Montana has its own mini-Superfund to address industrial sites not covered under the Federal CERCLA program as well as River Restoration, Future Fisheries Improvement, and Bull Trout and Cutthroat Trout Restoration Acts specifically targeted to restore damages caused by traditional extractive industries. In 1998, Oregon citizens adopted a 15 year program that dedicates over \$1 billion from state lottery receipts to creating new parks, repairing old parks, restoring watersheds, recovering salmonids, and conserving and enhancing natural resources. Arizona has implemented its "Route 66 Initiative" to remove abandoned underground storage tanks and expedite the cleanup of contaminated UST sites along this historic transportation route, while helping revitalize local economies. South Dakota has implemented cooperative Hardwood and Aspen projects with the Forest Service in the Black Hills to promote vegetative diversity.
5. Most Western states and several tribes have developed abandoned mine land programs that seek to protect the public from the health, safety and environmental hazards posed by past mining practices. These reclaimed mining areas can become part of valued restored landscapes. For example, dozens of abandoned mines safeguarded by the State of New Mexico became the focus of the Cerrillos Hills Historic Park near Santa Fe, where people now safely hike among the old mine openings and learn about mining history.

6. The Restoration Economy of the West is emerging as an important component of the region's recent economic growth through activities that provide high-paying jobs throughout the restoration cycle. From initial studies, to engineering and design, to the construction jobs during the on-the-land phase, these restoration activities are providing a full spectrum of economic growth across the West.
7. Upon completion, the restored landscapes provide new opportunities for businesses, cleaner water for our municipalities, healthier and more diverse native fish, wildlife and plant communities, and a clean and healthy environment for future generations.
8. The Restoration Economy is also contributing to extensive research and development programs to implement new technologies that include best practices for both restoration efforts and on-going and future extractive industries.
9. The vast majority of restoration work on Western lands is reliant on effective partnerships between federal, state, and local governments and private industry. Declining federal participation and funding is of great concern to Western governors.
10. The concept of the Restoration Economy has long been supported by the Western Governors' Association through numerous resolutions seeking to address sustainable public land management, continued viability of federal restoration programs, and preservation of the Western quality of life.

B. GOVERNORS' POLICY STATEMENT

1. Western governors recognize the increasing economic and social importance of the emerging Restoration Economy to our states. Restoration of past environmental damages capitalizes on the expertise of certain industries to carry out environmental mitigation, provide quality jobs, support future economic development while maintaining and enhancing the high quality of life enjoyed by Westerners.
2. Western governors recognize that public contracting for restoration work proves the best value to the taxpayer through competitive bidding and contract accountability.
3. Western governors believe that public investment in restoration programs provide a significant return on investments that is realized through a larger tax base, the cultivation of new and increased economic activity, and quality of life amenities highly valued by the general public.
4. Western governors urge Congress and the Administration to provide for overall public and ecosystem health through federal policies that accelerate the restoration, remediation, and cleanup efforts for assets held in public trust or

located on public lands throughout the West. Critical to this commitment to present and future generations are: adequate appropriations to the restoration and improvement budgets of federal land, water, and wildlife management agencies; restoring funding solvency for programs such as Superfund and the continued funding and reauthorization of vital programs such as abandoned mine land restoration.

5. Western governors urge Congress and the Administration to provide matching funds for on-going state restoration programs such as Future Fisheries, Bull Trout/Cutthroat Trout Restoration, and Oregon's Park and Natural Resources Fund.
6. Western governors ask Congress and the Administration to recognize the importance of the Restoration Economy not only to the West but to the entire United States, through the establishment of a multiyear appropriation formula similar to the Highway Bill.
7. Western governors urge Congress and the Administration to recognize the importance of the Restoration Economy and direct federal agencies to develop key policy recommendations for consideration by the Administration and the Congress that include, but are not limited to: Provide for sustained growth in restorative economic activities; develop appropriate incentives for private sector restoration activities; enhance the federal restoration activities throughout federal agencies; and identify opportunities for federal, state, and local restoration partnerships.

C. GOVERNORS' MANAGEMENT DIRECTIVE

1. The WGA shall post this Resolution to its web site to be referred to and transmitted as necessary.
2. This Resolution will be specifically distributed to federal and state agency administrators and members of the Congressional committees and subcommittees having authority to promote the continued growth and success of the Restoration Economy.