



WESTERN GOVERNORS' ASSOCIATION

Serving the Governors of 19 States and 3 US-Flag Pacific Islands

Climate Adaptation Priorities for the Western States

WGA Resolutions

*Regional and National
Policies Regarding Global
Climate Change (2009)*

*Improving Forest and
Rangeland Health in the
West (2009)*

*Future Management of
Drought in the West (2008)*

Key Documents

*Climate Adaptation
Priorities for the Western
States: Scoping Report
(2010)*

*Water Needs and Strate-
gies for a Sustainable
Future: Progress Report
(2010)*

*Water Needs and Strate-
gies for a Sustainable
Future: Next Steps (2008)*

*Clean Energy, a Strong
Economy, and a Healthy
Environment – Progress
Report (2007)*

Letters

*Comments to NOAA on
the Climate Service Strate-
gic Vision And Framework
(2010)*

Across the West, states are experiencing adverse impacts of climate change and variability on the environment, infrastructure, economies and communities. Western Governors are working to design and implement practical and cost-effective management strategies that will result in a more resilient West.

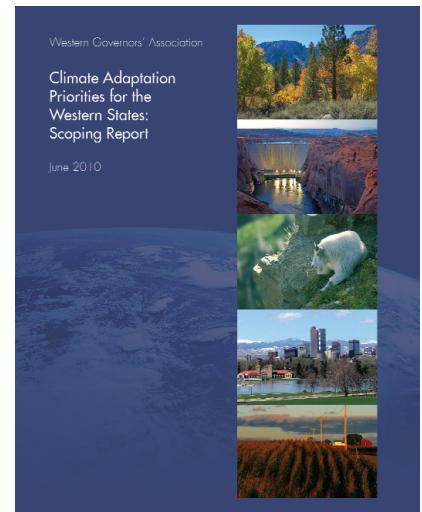
In 2009, the WGA adopted policy resolution 09-02, “Supporting the Integration of Climate Adaptation Science in Western States.” With assistance from its Climate Adaptation Work Group – consisting of state experts from across the West – and in collaboration with a number of federal, local, and outside experts, Western Governors approved a report in June 2010 entitled, “Climate Adaptation Priorities for Western States: Scoping Report.”

The WGA Climate Adaptation Work Group relies on several long-standing WGA initiatives to develop cross-sector perspectives to address climate adaptation. The Work Group includes experts from the Western Governors’ Wildlife Council, the Western States Water Council, the Forest Health Advisory Committee, and the Western Regional Air Partnership, as well as several statewide climate and resource managers.

This structure makes efficient use of existing resources, includes diverse sectors from Western states, and allows quick communication with broad audiences. The “Scoping Report” identified several key priorities for advancing climate adaptation in the Western United States, including:

1. sharing smart practices for climate adaptation,
2. developing science to be used in decision-making, and
3. coordinating with federal entities and other climate adaptation initiatives.

The WGA Work Group is currently focusing on two primary strategies to meet these priorities, as described on the following page.



WGA Climate Adaptation Work Group

Climate

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Idaho – Jess Byrne

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Provide Resources and Strengthen Capacity for Climate Adaptation in the West

State governments currently engage in planning processes across a variety of issue areas, including air quality, forest management, water resources, wildlife conservation and transportation. Many of these sectors – and associated state services, operations, and assets – will be influenced by the impacts of a changing climate. The WGA is developing a training series to help states incorporate new protocols, guidelines, and strategies in light of climate change and variability. WGA will work with all 19 WGA member states to target and assist ongoing planning efforts with the tools and resources necessary to incorporate climate adaptation into existing processes.

The goals of the training series include:

1. Provide state resource planners with the tools, methods and technical assistance needed to incorporate climate change into ongoing planning processes.
2. Create a forum to enhance communication and dialogue with climate adaptation researchers to help set priorities for investment in science and research that informs decision makers.
3. Identify multi-state or cross-boundary climate adaptation needs, as well as regional data sharing needs, and consider how they may be addressed through regional collaboration.
4. Determine how state agencies can collaborate with federal and local governments and other partners.
5. Develop a clearinghouse of best practices that state agencies and managers may refer to when developing their states' adaptation efforts.

Shape Federal Climate Adaptation Initiatives to Serve Western States

Federal agencies have developed several new initiatives aimed at addressing climate adaptation. Among them are the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Climate Service; the Department of Interior's Climate Science Centers and Landscape Conservation Cooperatives; and the National Climate Assessment.

The Governors' resolution calls for coordination of these new initiatives. New programs must be designed to serve decision makers who are responding to on-the-ground climate change. WGA is working with the states to shape these new federal initiatives and to ensure they provide the information, services and resources the states and region need to develop workable and resilient climate adaptation practices. These federal initiatives must be properly designed to complement and strengthen state climate adaptation practices, without creating additional work.

November 2010