



**Memorandum of Understanding  
Between the Western Governors' Association  
and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**



**Collaboration on Information Service Needs and State Capacity Building for  
Effective State Adaptation to Climate Variability and Change**

**June 30, 2011  
Coeur d'Alene, Idaho**

**Background and Purpose**

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the members of the Western Governors' Association (WGA) (together, "the Parties") share a common goal to develop and use sound data and information related to climate variability and change to effectively manage natural resources and human infrastructure.

NOAA's mission is to provide the science, service, and stewardship needed to build healthy ecosystems, communities, and economies resilient in the face of climate variability and change. NOAA is working to organize its capabilities to best contribute to a coordinated federal approach to climate services, supporting effective preparation as climate varies and changes. NOAA also aims to partner with states, territories, tribes and local communities to develop strategies to communicate research results on climate impacts and improve the effectiveness of science to inform decision-making.

The WGA represents the Governors of 19 Western states and three U.S. Flag Pacific Islands. The Governors recognize the significant impacts of climate on our environment, infrastructure, economies and communities, and they are committed to developing better information and new management strategies to build a resilient West. In 2009, the Western Governors adopted policy resolution 09-2: *Supporting the Integration of Climate Adaptation Science in the West*. In 2010, the WGA Climate Adaptation Work Group released a report, *Climate Adaptation Priorities for Western States: A Scoping Report* (the Scoping Report). This report details the economic, social and environmental impacts anticipated from climate change and urges collaboration among all levels of government and between the scientific and management communities.

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to improve the development, coordination and dissemination of climate information to support the adaptation priorities and resource management decisions of WGA members. This would include strengthening existing ties between science and decision-making regarding climate variability and change.

**Objectives and Actions**

1) The Parties will undertake an initial set of projects of immediate interest that will focus on options for incorporating information on climate extremes, variability and future trends at the appropriate scale in the following two areas:

- a) Disaster risk reduction focusing on the impact of extreme events (e.g., droughts, floods, fires, hurricanes and tropical cyclones) on economies, communities, and ecosystems; and,
- b) Improved science and climate information to support management of coastal, estuarine and marine resources important to achieving resilient communities and ecosystems.

The Parties will work together to understand and prioritize the climate information needed to address near term management challenges. This could include developing and delivering early warning or rapid response information to address these needs.

2) The Parties will assist one another in coordinating with other federal efforts that are also addressing climate information needs, services and adaptation strategies. These could include relevant Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) task forces, U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP) interagency coordination efforts, and various agency-specific efforts to link to the sectors of interest to the Western states and Pacific Island territories.

3) The Parties will also work with states and other agencies collectively or subregionally (e.g., West Coast states, Intermountain West states) to identify other key vulnerabilities or sectors that are affected by climate, such as forestry, agriculture, wildlife, biodiversity, and air quality. The Parties will consider how to meet information needs at the appropriate scales, and they will identify options to increase capacity to conduct planning and implement strategies to address these issues.

#### Implementation

The objectives and actions described above are consistent with the Scoping Report and NOAA's mission. The Parties will identify the appropriate staff from the states, territories and NOAA to execute the activities described above. The Parties will actively recruit other federal and non-federal partners to contribute to this effort, particularly with respect to identifying other key sectors that are being, or are projected to be, affected by climate change and the information and resources needed to prepare for climate variability and change.

When appropriate, specific projects or activities undertaken by the Parties under this MOU will be carried out pursuant to Implementing Agreements. Such Agreements will specify the responsibilities of the Parties, the expected resource commitments, legal authority citations, a description of any financial arrangements, programmatic points of contact, and other relevant information. Other public and private partners may be included by the Parties in such Agreements, as appropriate.

#### Settlement of Disputes

Any dispute concerning interpretation or implementation of the MOU will be resolved through discussion by the Parties.

#### Effective Date, Duration, Amendment and Termination

This MOU will be effective on the last date appearing below and will remain in effect for three (3) years from that date.

This MOU may be amended by mutual consent of the Parties. The Parties may terminate this MOU upon mutual consent or by one Party providing the other Party ninety (90) days prior notice.

Agreed to this 30 day of June 2011,

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

Christine Gregoire  
Governor of Washington  
WGA Vice-Chair

Dr. Jane Lubchenco  
Administrator  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration