



Western Governors' Association Policy Resolution 13-07

Farm Bill and Western Agriculture

A. BACKGROUND

1. Agriculture and forestry in the Western states and territories are significantly different than in other regions of the country. We have greater variations in soil, climate, terrain, agricultural commodities and practices, and water availability.
2. The value of agriculture and forestry to the western economy – especially in agricultural, remote, rural and forested communities – makes the passage of a Farm Bill particularly important to the Western Governors.

B. GOVERNORS' POLICY STATEMENT

1. Western Governors support long-term federal legislation which strengthens local farm families and communities, including programs for all agricultural working lands, forests, and rangelands.
2. Western Governors support state-driven targeted conservation with landscape scale approaches to address locally identified natural resource issues for farm, range, tropical and forest resource concerns on both private and public lands, such as soil, air and water quality, drought and wildfire impacts, wildlife habitat conservation needs and invasive species.
3. Western Governors recognize the contributions of private landowners as an integral part of both the remote and rural landscape and America's agricultural heritage, and support expanded opportunities for private forests and rangelands to support local farm families and communities.
4. Western Governors support implementation of standard monitoring procedures to evaluate program benefits and ensure that fish and wildlife, forestry, jungle, soil, water and air goals are met, in conjunction with production agriculture goals.
5. Western Governors support risk management strategies and a combination of tools to support agriculture and strengthen food safety and delivery systems providing quality food to the world.
6. Western Governors support research and education through land grant university systems to transfer knowledge across the spectrum of agricultural production

techniques, from organic farming to aquaculture to high-productivity conventional methods, in order to feed the projected 9.1 billion people to be in the world by 2050.

7. Western Governors support the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). APHIS works in partnership with state departments of agriculture to monitor, prevent and control infestations of invasive pests and diseases and curtail or minimize wildlife conflicts, which can cause widespread environmental and economic damage and safety hazards. APHIS works in cooperation with other federal agencies, states, territories, counties and private entities to implement management programs.
8. Western Governors support the continued efforts of the Rural Utilities Service to provide financial assistance for critical drinking water, wastewater facilities and broadband connectivity in rural and remote areas, particularly in communities that have minimal or no such infrastructure. Expanding broadband access to rural America will allow citizens to compete in a global market and have access to IT health care, education and public safety resources.

C. GOVERNORS' MANAGEMENT DIRECTIVE

1. The Governors direct the WGA staff, where appropriate, to work with Congressional committees of jurisdiction and the Executive Branch to achieve the objectives of this resolution including funding, subject to the appropriations process, based on a prioritization of needs.
2. Furthermore, the Governors direct WGA staff to develop, as appropriate and timely, detailed annual work plans to advance policy positions and goals contained in this resolution. Those work plans shall be presented to, and approved by, Western Governors prior to implementation. WGA staff shall keep Governors informed, on a regular basis, of their progress in implementing approved annual work plans.