



WESTERN GOVERNORS' ASSOCIATION

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June 30, 2013

Honorable Nancy Sutley
Chair
White House Council on Environmental Quality
722 Jackson Place, NW
Washington, DC 20502

Dear Ms. Sutley:

Western Governors express our appreciation for President Obama's June 7th Memorandum: *Transforming our Nation's Electric Grid Through Improved Siting, Permitting and Review*. We are encouraged by the President's commitment to make these federal regulatory processes more efficient. We believe the effort of designating and developing Western energy corridors and streamlining permitting, review and siting is improved if states are included as equal partners.

Large infrastructure projects – particularly in the West, where federal, state and private lands are often impacted -- pose complicated and expensive challenges. Project proponents must navigate myriad approvals and jurisdictional authorities, and interact with a variety of communities and landscapes. Streamlined and coordinated federal-state regulatory processes can reduce conflict, uncertainty and financial risk in building such complex projects.

Western Governors have a long history of coordinating stakeholders around a host of transmission related topics. Western Governors understand our citizens and their values; we know the stakeholder groups that should be engaged; we have direct connections with state and local officials with purview and technical expertise in permitting. Western Governors have reviewed their own regulatory processes, created state regulatory road maps, and built landscape level planning tools. These tools can help inform the federal process and ensure greater consensus for finalizing the energy corridors.

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We suggest a process in which states and federal agencies reach consensus about where energy corridors will be designated, as required under Section 368 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005, and create efficiencies in the review, permitting and siting process. A strong state-federal steering group will create the best opportunity to garner support and stakeholder buy-in for final corridor designations. We believe that having states as true partners in the federal process results in better outcomes. We urge you to take advantage of this opportunity.

We request a meeting to discuss the processes that are undertaken and come to an agreement on how Western Governors, both collectively and individually, can work with the Administration on specific projects in the West – including the Energy Policy Act of 2005 Section 368 designations.

Sincerely,



Gary R. Herbert
Governor, State of Utah
Chairman, WGA



John Hickenlooper
Governor, State of Colorado
Vice Chairman, WGA

cc: Honorable Barack Obama, President of the United States
Honorable Ernest Moniz, Secretary of Energy
Honorable Sally Jewell, Secretary of the Interior
Honorable Tom Vilsack, Secretary of Agriculture
Honorable Chuck Hagel, Secretary of Defense