



WESTERN GOVERNORS' ASSOCIATION

Brian Schweitzer
Governor of Montana
Chairman

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

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September 22, 2009

The Honorable Daniel Inouye, Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran, Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski, Chair
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators:

As Congress completes its consideration of the fiscal year 2010 Commerce, Justice, Science appropriations bill, the Western Governors' Association encourages you to continue your past support for the programs that are of importance to citizens in the Western states.

We are pleased that the Obama Administration and Congress have proposed a healthy budget for NOAA. We note the Senate has included \$430 million for the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research, and within that office, we are particularly pleased that NOAA has requested \$4.6 million for the National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS). The development and implementation of NIDIS has long been an important goal for the Western Governors' Association. We support the NIDIS funding proposed for FY 2010 and the drought early warning systems that will be implemented in the states.

Similarly, we are pleased to see the Administration's request for funding necessary to build a thermal infrared sensor (TIRS) as part of NASA's Landsat Data Continuity Mission (LDCM), now scheduled for launch in December 2012. This data is increasingly important in Western water management, and its loss would have serious negative consequences for measuring and monitoring agricultural and other water uses. We appreciate Administrator Bolden's promise at his confirmation hearing to

“...work with OMB and the Congress to ensure NASA maintains the flight of TIRS on LDCM as a high priority.” Of note, Harvard University’s prestigious Ash Institute recently recognized the use of TIRS data by the Idaho Department of Water Resources to map evapotranspiration with a 2009 Innovations in American Government Award.

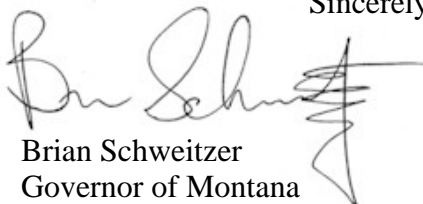
Additionally, Western Governors believe that planning for climate change adaptation should be undertaken in a coordinated fashion at all levels of government with state expertise being fully utilized. We encourage you to appropriate funds to federal programs that study climate adaptation and address scientific questions. As such, we appreciate Congressional efforts to fund the study and research of global climate change at over \$2 billion (House bill). Once it is authorized by Congress, we would support funding for a National Climate Service.

As for border and law enforcement efforts, we are concerned that the Administration has proposed terminating the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP). We would advise against this course of action. We note and appreciate that the House bill would fund SCAAP at \$400 million and the Senate bill at \$228 million for FY 2010.


Finally, we encourage you to include the needs of rural forests and farmlands in economic development programs. Programs that promote the utilization of farm and forestry feed stocks will help to build local economies suffering from the downturn in the housing and wood projects market.

In closing, we hope Congress will continue to invest in these priorities that provide so much benefit to the West.

Sincerely,



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C.E. “Butch” Otter
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The Honorable David Obey, Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jerry Lewis, Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Alan Mollohan, Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Wolf, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives:

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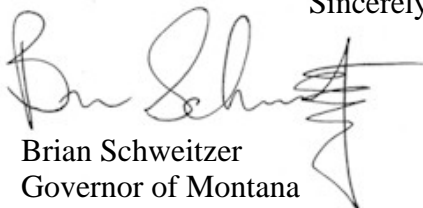
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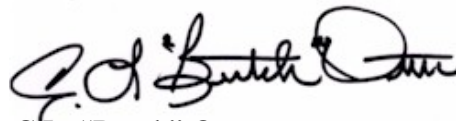
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