

WESTERN GOVERNORS' ASSOCIATION

North American Energy Summit Kicks off with Proposed Clean Energy Initiative, CBM Best Practices Handbook

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ALBUQUERQUE – Gov. Bill Richardson, Chairman of the Western Governors' Association, and Gov. Bill Owens, WGA Vice Chairman, kicked off the North American Energy Summit today with announcements of a clean-energy initiative and best practices handbook for coal bed methane development.

Richardson announced that he and Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, co-lead for WGA energy issues, are recommending a broad-based task force explore clean-energy and energy-efficiency opportunities and the policies "that will make them happen."

"Together, western governors can make a huge contribution to meeting our nation's energy needs and protecting its energy security, while reducing the costs and instability created for consumers and businesses when energy prices and supplies are uncertain," the letter to attendees from Govs. Richardson and Schwarzenegger said. "Our objectives should be to develop at least 30,000 MW of clean energy in the west by 2015, and to increase the efficiency of energy use by 20% by 2020."

Gov. Owens said he looks forward to the discussions and recommendations on the wide variety of topics to be covered through Friday. "We have abundant energy resources in the west and we need to explore how they can best be put to use in an environmentally sensible manner for our economic prosperity and national security."

Also on opening day, Gov. Dave Freudenthal of Wyoming released a new best practices handbook for developing coal bed methane (CBM). Govs. Freudenthal of Wyoming and Judy Martz of Montana spearheaded the WGA initiative that involved industry, landowners, government and environmental representatives.

"While CBM is a critical component of our energy supply, the growth in CBM development in the west poses challenges for the communities in which it occurs, including the construction of new roads, pipelines and other facilities," the lead governors said in a letter accompanying the handbook. "One means of addressing these challenges is to coordinate and foster sharing of information that will promote sound, efficient and environmentally appropriate development of CBM."

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Energy Summit Initiatives Announced - 2

It is hoped that use of the best management practices will encourage environmental stewardship, reduce potential conflicts and provide for efficient resource development. Benefits from CBM development such as job creation, tax revenue, royalty payments, and physical improvements for landowners would also result from such practices.

The CBM handbook will be a living document, updated and amended as technology evolves and as practices are monitored over time.

The clean energy letter and the best practices handbook are both available on the Web at www.westgov.org.

Tonight Gov. Richardson will deliver a keynote address at an opening dinner. Speakers tomorrow and Friday include:

- Govs. Bill Owens of Colorado, WGA Vice Chairman; Janet Napolitano of Arizona; and Mike Rounds of South Dakota
- Kyle E. McSlarrow, Deputy Secretary of the U.S. Department of Energy
- Sens. Pete Domenici, Chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee and Jeff Bingaman, ranking member of the committee
- Patrick Wood, Chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
- Canadian Premiers Ralph Klein of Alberta, Gary Doer of Manitoba and Joseph Handley of the Northwest Territories
- George Anderson, Deputy Minister of Natural Resources, Canada
- Gov. Enrique Martinez y Martinez, Coahuila, Mexico
- Ernesto Cordero-Arroyo, Undersecretary for Energy Formulation and Technological Development, Mexico
- Chris Devers, Chairman, Council of Energy Resource Tribes
- Dr. Mario Molina, Nobel Laureate for his work in atmospheric chemistry
- Ray Anderson, CEO Coalition on Sustainable Development
- Jeff Sterba, CEO, PNM

An Energy Futures Expo continues through Friday and features a wide variety of technologies, systems, approaches and alternative fuel vehicles for meeting our 21st-century energy needs in an environmentally responsible manner.

An agenda for the Summit and registration information are available on the Web at www.westgov.org. The Western Governors' Association is an independent, nonprofit organization representing the governors of 18 states and three U.S.-flag islands in the Pacific. Through their Association, the governors identify and address key policy and governance issues in natural resources, the environment, human services, economic development, international relations and public management.

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