



WESTERN  
GOVERNORS'  
ASSOCIATION



## STATEMENT OF WESTERN POLITICAL LEADERS

Representatives of the Western Governors' Association, the Council of State Governments-*WEST*, the Western Interstate Region of the National Association of Counties and the Western Municipal Association agree to the following statement upon completion of the first joint meeting of their organizations on August 16, 1997.

Recognizing the West's dynamic growth, transformation and other common characteristics, elected leaders of western states, counties and municipalities desire a closer working relationship among and between state and local elected officials and their associations in order to advance the interests of the West and more effectively serve our common constituencies. With term limitations being a reality in many western states, collaboration among organizations of state and local officials is also important to provide stability and continuity in the formation of public policy.

### **Western elected officials stand united in serving the interests of the West on federal actions which impact the West. Specifically we:**

- Applaud the opportunities which federal devolution affords for a better intergovernmental partnership with Washington and for more effective service delivery at the state and local level.
- Insist that federal devolution be accompanied by appropriate sharing of federal funds and discretion for states and local governments to carry out those programs delegated to us by Congress.
- Oppose federal preemption of traditional state and local taxing and regulatory powers and identify preemption as the growing western concern that threatens our federal system and the ability of state and local governments to serve their citizens.
- Oppose federal mandates on state and local governments that are not accompanied by federal dollars to pay for those mandates.
- Seek a partnership with the President, Congress and federal agencies to address the many issues facing the nation and particularly the West.

- Western elected officials resolve through their respective associations to work together to address issues of particular importance to the West in order to increase the influence of the West in dealing with the President Congress and federal agencies.
- Western elected officials recognize that just as under federalism the states should be treated as equal partners, so should the states treat the local governments as partners rather than as special interests. The states should refrain from imposing unfunded mandates and preemptions on the local governments just as the states expect restraint from the federal government.

**In an effort to implement the above goals, the respective associations agree to:**

- Establish ongoing communication networks among the four associations on all issues of mutual interest.
- Support improved communications among the associations during the policy development process.
- Explore ways to design solutions to common problems among state and local governments.
- Seek to identify key western issues capable of consensus positions and network these issues and positions among the associations and other parties as appropriate.
- Find ways to enhance and increase the combined political power of the western states.
- Schedule a follow up meeting in 1998 of representatives of the four associations to further the goals of this Statement.