



News of the Big West

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WMC Explores Partnership with Governors, Legislatures and Counties

Keynote speakers at the Western Municipal Conference Meeting - March 11, 2008 in Washington, DC were leaders of the three big organizations representing Western state and county governments:

- **Kent Briggs**, Executive Director of the Council of State Governments-West
- **Kevin Moran**, Director, Wash. DC office of the Western Governors Association
- **Ryan Yates**, Director, Western interstate Region (WIR) of the National Association of Counties.

According to the three leaders the Western Municipal Conference “fills a void” in policy development for regional issues of the Western states. All three enthusiastically offered active support to the WMC to formally bring cities into the discussion of critical policy issues facing Western states.

Briggs said that “cities have been missed in the policy process.” He said that policy statements with the logos of all four organizations in the letterhead would be “impressive,” and carefully read by congressional leaders. He wants to start by having all four organizational leaders meet together. It would also be an important photo opportunity. He expressed a vision of all four leaders testifying together in Congress and having a joint conference of

all four organizations. He also suggests that the four groups engage the western study centers of the universities including Stanford and Colorado.

Moran said that the WGA would like to partner with the four Western organizations in 2008 to create briefing presentations on Western issues for Congress and the new cabinet. He wants to “drill down” to find consistent policies for all four organizations and create joint position papers. He feels the goals of the WGA are basically the same as the Western Municipal Conference. Bread and butter issues are energy and natural resources, but they are also getting increasingly involved in human issues, such as immigration. WGA also wants to focus on climate change impacts such as deeper droughts, etc. He suggests that monthly conference calls be instituted between the four organizations.

Yates suggested partnerships between WIR and the WMC to create “targeted grassroots campaigns” on issues such as transportation, energy, water, and economic development. Due to the concentration of population in cities in the West, counties have good representation in the U.S. Senate while cities have better representation in the U.S. House of Representatives.

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Governors Ask WMC for Support to Protect Critical Wildlife Corridors

The Western Governors Association (WGA) has asked the Western Municipal Conference to coordinate efforts to protect multi-state wildlife migration corridors critical to the preservation of fish and wildlife. According to the WGA, "Large intact and functioning ecosystems, healthy fish and wildlife populations, and abundant public access to natural landscapes are a significant contributing factor to the West's economic and in-migration boom as well as quality of life. Critical wildlife migration corridors and crucial wildlife habitats are necessary to maintain flourishing wildlife populations."

A key motivation for this effort is making sure that oil and gas development is planned to protect migrating

wildlife. The WGA is asking the Congress "to amend Section 390, Subpart B (3) of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 to remove the categorical exclusion for NEPA reviews for exploration or development of oil and gas in wildlife corridors and crucial wildlife habitat on federal lands. By removing the categorical exclusion, appropriate environmental site analysis will be completed as necessary to protect crucial wildlife habitat and significant migration corridors located in the field of development."

Also, the WGA asks the federal BLM to "work collaboratively with the states to ensure that states' concerns in preserving wildlife migration corridors and crucial wildlife habitats are met." And, "The BLM should also

use its land use plans and amendments to consider incorporation of State or other Federal agencies, local governments, and Indian tribes approved or adopted resource-related plans, including but certainly not limited to big game population objectives."

This issue will be considered by the Western Municipal Conference Board of Directors.

For more information on this issue, go to the WGA website: <http://www.westgov.org/>

WMC Draft Implementation Plan Open for Discussion and Ideas

March 2008 - Agree on cooperation with WGA, CSG-West, and WIR

- Accept WGA and CSG-West invitation to join Wildlife Corridors Committee, Climate change impacts, and plan cooperation on other mutual issues; and assist in development of Western Policy Briefing papers for new administration.
- Distribute first bi-monthly WMC "Big West" article for League Newsletters. Article on WMC Meeting in DC and Action Plan.

May-June 2008 - Launch WMC Website

May 2008

- Quarterly full Board Teleconference: Issue positions for adoption as needed and Plan for November NLC Event
- Distribute 2nd bi-monthly WMC "Big West" article

June 2008 - June 29 — July 1 - WMC Chair and Coordinator attend WGA Meeting Jackson, WY to meet with CSG and WGA staff and attend policy meetings, exp Wildlife Corridors and Climate Change.

July 2008 - Distribute 3rd bi-monthly WMC "Big West" article

August 2008 - Quarterly full Board Teleconference. Plan event and issues for NLC in November, and discuss issues

September 2008 - Distribute 4th bi-monthly WMC "Big West" article — Highlight NLC — WMC event

October 2008

November 2008 - Quarterly full Board Meeting; Implement major WMC Program at Congress of Cities.

What Are Western Issues?

Common Issues identified by the:
 Western Governor’s Association (WGA)
 Council of State Governments –West (CSG-West)
 Western Interstate Region – National Assoc of Counties (WIR-NACo)
 and Western Municipal Conference (WMC) are:

WGA	CSG-West	WIR-NACo	WMC *
Energy/Alternative energy	Energy/Alternative energy	Energy/Alternative energy	Energy/Alternative energy
Building Efficiency/ Energy Efficiency	Energy conservation	Energy efficiency	Energy efficiency for communi- ties
Climate Change			Climate Change
Water/drought issues	Water/drought issues	Water/drought issues	Water/drought issues
Wildlife Corridors	Endangered Species	Open Space	Land Use/ Endangered Species
Transportation	Transportation	Transportation	Interstate transportation fund- ing and expansion
Border Security/ McCain/Kennedy Immigration Legislation	Border Security/ McCain/Kennedy Immigration Legislation	Border Security	Border Security
Action Plan for Public Lands Education (APPLE)	Action Plan for Public Lands Education (APPLE)	Rural School Funding/PILT	
		Special courts	
		Unfunded Mandates	
			Defense against ballot initia- tives
Economic development	Economic development	Economic development	Economic development
Western political forums	Western political forums		Western political forums
Wildland Fire Issues		Wildland Fire Issues	
Pollution control	Pollution control	Pollution control	Pollution control

*From WMC Mission and Issues drafted by Western State League Executive Directors Committee



New WMC Board Seated

Chair of the Western Municipal Conference is Pat Eklund, Mayor of Novato, California
 Vice-Chair (Vacant/TBA)
 Immediate Past President is Ron Schmitt, Council Member of Sparks, Nevada

Under the revised By-Laws of the WMC adopted in New Orleans, the Board consists of the State League Director of each Western State and one other member appointed by each state league:

Nevada: J. David Fraser, ED; and Ron Schmitt, Council Member, Sparks
 California: Chris McKenzie, ED; and Pat Eklund, Mayor, Novato
 Alaska: Kathy Wasserman, ED; and member to be named
 Arizona: Ken Strobeck, ED; and Wayne Ecton, Vice Mayor, City of Scottsdale
 Colorado: Sam Mamet, ED; and Steve Rabe, City Administrator, Canon City
 Idaho: Ken Harwood, ED; and member to be named
 Kansas: Don Moler, ED; and member to be named
 Montana: Alec Hansen, ED; and member to be named
 Nebraska: Lynn Rex, ED; and Gordon Adams, Mayor, Norfolk
 New Mexico: Bill Fulginiti, ED; and Eddie Trujillo, Judge, Las Vegas
 North Dakota: Connie Sprynczynatyk, ED; and Jim Brownlee, Administrator, West Fargo
 Oklahoma: Carolyn Stager, ED; and member to be named
 Oregon: Michael J. McCauley, ED; and Lou Ogden, Mayor, Tualatin
 South Dakota: Yvonne Taylor, ED; and James Kanable, SDML President
 Utah: Ken Bullock, ED; and Joe Johnson, Mayor, Bountiful
 Washington: Stan Finkelstein, ED; and Rich Munson, Mayor, Spokane
 Wyoming: George Parks, ED; and member to be named

WMC Approves Contract for a Part-Time Coordinator

At the WMC meeting March 11, 2008 the WMC membership unanimously voted to enter into a part-time contract with Kevin Ritchie to act as a Coordinator for the WMC. According to Chair Pat Eklund, the Coordinator will allow the WMC to more actively work on Western policy issues, more quickly disseminate information to Western State Leagues, work with the WMC Board, and provide more continuity between WMC and other political organizations in the West. The contract outlines duties and is for a nominal amount of compensation.

Ritchie is a former City Manager and recently retired as Executive Director of the Alaska Municipal League. He is a former member of the NLC Board of Directors and long time supporter of the WMC. He is currently an adjunct Assistant Professor of Public Administration at the University of Alaska Southeast.

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