



## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Canadian section of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group meets with US Western Governors**

On 27 and 28 June 2010, the Honourable Wayne Easter, P.C., M.P., Vice-Chair, led a delegation from the Canadian Section of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group (IPG) to the Annual Meeting of the Western Governors' Association in Whitefish, Montana. Other members of the delegation included Mr. Brian Masse, M.P., Vice-Chair and Mr. Michel Guimond, M.P. Governors Schweitzer (Montana), Otter (Idaho), Freudenthal (Wyoming), Gibbons (Nevada), Gregoire (Washington), Herbert (Utah), Richardson (New Mexico), Ritter (Colorado) and Rounds (South Dakota) attended the meeting, as did Canadian Premier Selinger from Manitoba. At the meeting, delegates had the opportunity to speak with Governors Schweitzer, Gibbons, Ritter and Rounds, as well as with His Excellency Gary Doer, Canada's Ambassador to the United States.

"Certainly, Canada and the western states in the United States share common concerns as well as common goals in a number of areas. While all of the discussions were extremely informative, I was particularly interested in the comments made about the US Department of the Interior's Treasured Landscapes initiative, and especially those aspects that address the Great Lakes. The Great Lakes are a huge resource shared by the United States and Canada, supplying 84% of North America's supply of fresh water. Clearly, the health of the Great Lakes, the effects of invasive species and efforts directed toward restoration are of joint interest. In fact, the Great Lakes were an important area of discussion at the May 2010 Annual Meeting of the IPG," said Mr. Masse.

Mr. Easter continued: "Energy is another important area for both countries, and was another topic of focus at the Annual Meeting. The United States is Canada's primary energy customer and Canada is the largest energy supplier to the United States, providing petroleum, natural gas, uranium and electricity. At the WGA meeting, panellists spoke about a range of energy-related issues, including both renewable and traditional energy sources. Importantly, comments were also made about energy technology, and this area is one in which I think there are lots of opportunities for our 2 countries to work together as we pursue North American energy security. Both of our countries are concerned about clean energy, energy conservation and energy efficiency, among other important issues."

The 19 states in the WGA and Canada share a mutually beneficial relationship. According to recent figures, nearly 2.4 million jobs in those states rely on Canada-US trade. Bilateral trade was recently valued at more than \$137 billion: just over \$52 billion was exported from the 19 states to Canada, while they imported almost \$85 billion from Canada. Moreover, recent data suggest that Canadians made more than 8.8 million visits to the WGA states and spent almost \$5 billion, while residents of the WGA states made more than 3.6 million visits to Canada and spent nearly \$2 billion.

The Western Governors' Association includes the governors from 19 western states as well as from American Samoa, Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands. The Canadian Premiers from British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba also participate in the WGA's activities. The WGA uses six basic strategies: develop and communicate regional policy; serve as a leadership forum; build regional capacity; conduct research and disseminate findings; form coalitions and partnerships in order to advance regional interests; and build public understanding and support for regional issues and policy positions. More information on the WGA can be found at [www.westgov.org](http://www.westgov.org).

It should be noted that the views expressed in this news release are specific to the Canadian Section of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group and, as such, may not reflect the views of US Congressional counterparts.

The Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group aims to find points of convergence in respective national policies, to initiate dialogue on points of divergence, to encourage the exchange of information, and to promote better understanding among legislators on shared issues of concern. Additional information on the Group can be found at

<http://www.parl.gc.ca/ia/Association.aspx?Lang=E&DCId=4&DTId=6&P=overview&ORGId=1383>.

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