

Canada - United States
Inter-Parliamentary Group
Canadian Section



Groupe interparlementaire
Canada - États-Unis
Section canadienne

**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
respecting its participation at the 2014 Annual Meeting of the
Western Governors' Association (WGA)**

Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group

**Colorado Springs, Colorado, United States of America
June 9–11, 2014**

Report

DELEGATION MEMBERS AND STAFF

From 9–11 June 2014, the Canadian Section of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group (IPG) was represented at the 2014 Annual Meeting of the Western Governors' Association (WGA) by Senator Doug Black, Senator Percy Downe, Mr. Massimo Pacetti, M.P. and Mr. Jasbir Sandhu, M.P. The meeting was held in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The delegation was accompanied by Ms. June Dewetering, Senior Advisor to the Canadian Section of the IPG.

THE EVENT

The Western Governors' Association includes the governors from 19 U.S. western states (see the Appendix), 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 to achieve its goals:

- 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.

Each year, the WGA holds an annual meeting. This annual meeting was chaired by Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper, who selected "We Go Altogether" as the WGA's motto for his year as WGA chair. Governors Jan Brewer (Arizona), Sam Brownback (Kansas), Steve Bullock (Montana), Jack Dalrymple (North Dakota), Dennis Daugaard (South Dakota), Gary Herbert (Utah), Matthew Mead (Wyoming), Butch Otter (Idaho) and Brian Sandoval (Nevada) also attended the meeting, as did Gary Doer, Canada's Ambassador to the United States and former Premier of Manitoba.

The 2015 annual meeting will be chaired by Governor Sandoval, who has selected drought as a key topic of interest for his year as WGA chair. The WGA's vice-chair will be Oregon Governor John Fitzhaber.

DELEGATION OBJECTIVES FOR THE EVENT

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.

In addition to regular meetings with their federal counterparts, in recent years, members of the Canadian Section of the IPG have attended national and regional meetings of governors. At these events, Canadian delegates take the opportunity to engage in conversations that will help achieve the Canadian Section's objectives, and to communicate the nature and scope of the bilateral relationship.

The Canadian Section of the IPG intends to attend future annual meetings of the WGA and to continue its work in advocating Canadian interests.

ACTIVITIES DURING THE EVENT

During the 2014 annual meeting, the WGA held the following keynote addresses and discussions:

- Keynote: Secretary Sally Jewell, U.S. Department of the Interior;
- Preparing for and Responding to Drought and Flooding;
- Water in the West: Challenges and Opportunities;
- Keynote: Fred Hochberg, Export-Import Bank of the United States;
- Keynote: Gina McCarthy, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency;
- The *Washington Post's* Western Issues Forum;
- The Impacts of Major Western Oil and Gas Finds: Meeting Challenges and Capturing Opportunities; and
- Managing Inter-related Challenges of Wildfire, the *Endangered Species Act* and Invasive Species.

This report summarizes the addresses and discussions at the 2014 annual meeting.

KEYNOTE

Secretary Sally Jewell, U.S. Department of the Interior

- "Putting things off" for another 10 years is not an option.
- Governments must work together, and must do so now.

PREPARING FOR AND RESPONDING TO DROUGHT AND FLOODING

Jo-Ellen Darcy, U.S. Department of Defense

- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will prepare for drought and flooding.
- To the extent possible, planning can have significant impacts.
- The near- and long-term benefits and risks need to be understood.
- Mitigation and adaptation are important.
- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers can help communities plan to meet their water-related needs.

Kathryn Sullivan, U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

- Forecasting “weather” is not the same thing as forecasting “climate.”
- The drought in the U.S. West started earlier and is likely to last longer than in previous years, and it is expected to affect new areas; that said, there is some reduction in drought conditions in selected areas.
- Conditions in the Pacific Ocean are favourable for the development of an El Nino weather system.
- The U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) helps states by informing them about weather, monitoring weather to enable states to engage in long-term planning and working with state agencies to identify needs.
- NOAA needs additional improvements in relation to the delivery of information, and more data.

Robert Bonnie, U.S. Department of Agriculture

- The agricultural sector is affected by droughts.
- The most recent Farm Bill contained new disaster programs.
- Targeted funding to address drought exists.
- Proper tillage and land cover are important for preventing erosion.
- Those with good conservation practices “do better,” including in respect of soil health.
- Forest management needs to become more drought-resilient.

WATER IN THE WEST: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Mike Connor, U.S. Department of the Interior

- Water plays a critical role in economic vitality and the quality of life.

- In relation to water, stakeholders should ensure better coordination that is “up front” and occurs early.
- The increasing focus on water provides opportunities to develop and implement the strategies needed to meet water challenges and to raise awareness; education and the ability to work together are key opportunities.
- All levels of government are showing leadership on water issues.
- Water is primarily the prerogative of the states, a reality that is understood at the federal level; that said, state-federal collaboration would be fruitful.
- There have been some successes regarding improved water management, including in relation to Lake Mead and in California.
- There is an imbalance between the demand for water and the supply of water.
- There is an increasing demand for water, including because of population growth, changes in energy markets and agricultural needs.
- There are dwindling supplies of water, including because of aquifer issues.
- In relation to water, coordinated strategies and data to enable decision making are needed.
- Investments are required to address aging water-related infrastructure, including in relation to storage, technology – such as desalinization – needs to be deployed, and measures must be implemented to protect against invasive species.
- The notion that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure is relevant in a range of areas, including water.
- Every conversation about water should begin with conservation.

James Eklund, Colorado Water Conservation Board

- Like many states in the U.S. West, Colorado’s “story” is “written” in its water.
- Water-related conflicts “get the ink,” while efforts directed at water-related collaboration do not “make a headline.”
- Much of the U.S. West is experiencing a severe drought, with some areas recording the driest period in history.
- Drought requires states to be “nimble.”
- Some states have virtually no snow pack.
- States should work with the federal government to ensure that water projects “happen” more quickly.
- Water systems do not respect state or international boundaries.

John Entsminger, Southern Nevada Water Authority

- There are benefits to considering water from a regional perspective.
- Water is the lifeblood for people, businesses and communities.
- There are “false divides” between and among water uses, including recreation, commerce, agriculture, energy and consumers.
- It is possible to use less water and have robust economic growth.
- When there is an imbalance between the demand for water and the supply of water, there are three options: use less; get more; and/or secure delivery mechanisms.
- In the U.S. West, there are few options for increasing the water supply.
- In relation to water, adaptation strategies and contingency plans are required.

KEYNOTE

Fred Hochberg, Export-Import Bank of the United States

- The Export-Import (Ex-Im) Bank of the United States promotes a pro-growth agenda and functions in a manner that is complementary to the private sector; in doing so, it undertakes such activities as ensuring that businesses get paid and linking businesses – especially small businesses – with foreign opportunities.
- With the support of the Ex-Im Bank, businesses are able to compete with foreign companies on a more level playing field.
- Businesses pay a fee for the Ex-Im Bank’s services, with taxpayers receiving any surplus monies.
- About 60 nations around the world have an institution similar to the Ex-Im Bank; these other institutions may or may not have to “fight for their existence” every few years and/or to “play by the same rules” as the Ex-Im Bank.

KEYNOTE

Gina McCarthy, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

- On 2 June 2014, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed a clean power plan.
- States in the U.S. West are involved in interesting initiatives in relation to clean energy and conservation.
- Even if not identified as such, states and local communities have been taking climate change-related actions for a long time.

- Record droughts in some areas are coincident with record flooding in other areas.
- The urgency to act in relation to climate change is very clear.
- A “one size fits all” solution in relation to climate change is not appropriate, and states should be allowed to define for themselves where they “want to be” in a 21st century clean energy economy.
- The EPA supports flexibility and “putting states in the driver’s seat”; that said, with flexibility comes responsibility.
- In the context of cooperative federalism in relation to climate change, continuous engagement between federal and state governments is needed; when there is agreement about what is needed to assure public health, the environment and sustainability, the states should make the decisions about the specific actions needed within the state.
- Climate risks should be turned into business opportunities.
- In relation to climate change, the focus should be on facts and on what matters to people.
- While a diverse, reliable and affordable energy supply is important, so too is reducing carbon pollution.
- The U.S. West leads the nation in wind energy.

THE *WASHINGTON POST*'S WESTERN ISSUES FORUM

Reid Wilson, of the *Washington Post*, posed questions to Governors Bullock, Hickenlooper, Mead and Sandoval.

Question: What would be the impact of the U.S. EPA’s 2 June 2014 proposed rule to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from existing coal- and natural gas-fired power plants?

Governor Mead

- The proposed rule would have adverse implications for coal; the key question is how the country would be affected.
- Everyone has a shared interest in reducing pollution.
- Innovation and technology should be the focus, including how improvements can be made in relation to coal.

Governor Bullock

- It is widely understood that the climate is changing, and it is widely perceived that there is a need to act.
- Coal is important to the U.S. West and to the nation.
- What is known today will eclipse what will be known tomorrow.

Governor Sandoval

- Nevada has a range of renewable sources of energy, including solar and geothermal.
- Nevada Senate Bill 123 retires coal plants and increases the focus on renewable energy.

Governor Hickenlooper

- In 2004, Colorado passed its first renewable energy statute.
- Colorado has a wide range of energy sources.

Question: Is climate change a political “hot potato” or is it a settled debate?

Governor Mead

- Every energy source has challenges.
- It is in everyone’s interest to have every energy source as clean and efficient as possible.

Governor Bullock

- If there is the will and the capital, there will be change.
- Federal, state and private investments will change what the future looks like.
- Coal will always be part of the United States’ energy mix.

Governor Sandoval

- All states are dealing with the consequences of climate change.
- Water must be conserved at the same time that growth is enabled.
- At this point, the focus should be solutions, rather than blame or causes.

Question: What comments are relevant in relation to wildfires in the U.S. West?

Governor Sandoval

- The major wildfires in recent years have had a range of implications, including for sage grouse.

Governor Hickenlooper

- It is important to respond rapidly to each fire risk as it occurs.

Governor Bullock

- Some states in the U.S. West have relatively significant air assets, and aircraft are shared among states, as required.

Question: What comments are relevant in relation to drought in the U.S. West?

Governor Sandoval

- About 84% of Nevada is federal land and, thereby, federal responsibility.
- Drought will be a key WGA priority in 2015.

Governor Mead

- Significant funds are spent while fighting fires.
- Governors of states in the U.S. West help each other immediately and without question.

Question: How should states in the U.S. West prepare for floods?

Governor Hickenlooper

- When rebuilding after a flood, it is important to build in resiliency and to rebuild everything better.

Governor Bullock

- Disaster recovery should not be the only priority; measures that can be taken to avoid future problems should also be a focus.

Question: What comments are relevant in relation to sage grouse in the U.S. West?

Governor Mead

- Some people are optimistic that sage grouse will not become a listed species under the *Endangered Species Act*.
- Work on addressing sage grouse as an endangered species is providing a useful paradigm for work on other issues.
- In relation to sage grouse, the states should provide leadership.

Governor Sandoval

- States need to work together in protecting sage grouse.

Governor Hickenlooper

- In relation to sage grouse, locally generated solutions are needed.

- Sage grouse should be provided with every possible support.

Governor Bullock

- In relation to sage grouse, state-developed solutions are better than federal-imposed solutions.
- The focus should be developing sage grouse-related solutions within each state.

Question: As the federal government owns much of the land in some states, what is the impact on state policy?

Governor Sandoval

- Given ownership of the state's land, when a problem arises in Nevada, the state has 16% of the problem and the federal government has the remaining 84% of the problem.
- A collaborative relationship whereby the state and federal governments work together is preferred.

Governor Hickenlooper

- Large-scale sales of federal lands are unlikely to occur.

Governor Mead

- Each state must "live" within its means.
- States have great expertise in a number of areas, and have a vested interest in "doing things right."
- Federal land sales are unlikely to occur.

Question: What comments are relevant in relation to Medicaid expansion?

Governor Bullock

- Medicaid expansion is leading to cost-shifting onto those who have insurance, with impacts on hospitals, and cross-subsidization across states.

Governor Mead

- Medicaid expansion has a "one size fits all" approach, and is expensive.

Question: What comments are relevant in relation to the legalization of marijuana in Colorado?

Governor Hickenlooper

- There are some concerns about access by children to marijuana.
- Children do not believe the evidence indicating the harm to one's brain associated with marijuana use.

THE IMPACTS OF MAJOR WESTERN OIL AND GAS FINDS: MEETING CHALLENGES AND CAPTURING OPPORTUNITIES

Al Walker, Anadarko Petroleum Corporation

- Oil and gas rigs have a significant multiplier, with one rig leading to the creation of 100 jobs.
- Natural gas will be a significant contributor to U.S. energy independence.
- It is possible to use both fossil fuels and renewable energy sources.

Ben Fowke, Xcel Energy

- In order to have a secure energy future, aging infrastructure must be replaced.
- Natural gas is a game-changer, and has enabled the conversion of older, less efficient coal plants to natural gas plants.
- A focus should be the natural gas infrastructure that will be needed for the future.
- While natural gas is affordable today, the future is unpredictable; natural gas should be hedged with renewable energy sources so that "not all eggs are in the same basket."
- Natural gas will be increasingly important in the future, but other energy sources are also relevant.
- The "right" regulation is needed.

Tom Petrie, Petrie Partners

- Hydrocarbons are being "unlocked" from shale gas.
- Going forward, a key issue will be how state and federal regulatory oversight occur.

MANAGING INTER-RELATED CHALLENGES OF WILDFIRE, THE *ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT* AND INVASIVE SPECIES

Janice Schneider, U.S. Department of the Interior

- Open and continuing dialogue on such important issues as fires, endangered species and invasive species is needed; open communication and collaboration are critical for good decision making.
- Partnerships are critically important in order to move forward in an extremely productive manner.
- Invasive species are extremely challenging; approaches that will have the largest impacts should be identified and, as no one can “do it alone,” volunteers should be part of the team addressing invasive species.
- The prevalence of non-native species has changed the nature and extent of fires.
- Restoration, such as re-seeding, should occur as quickly as possible following a fire.
- Fires are a threat to sage grouse habitat.
- There is a need for a comprehensive strategy to increase operational effectiveness in relation to sage grouse habitat.
- Efforts should be directed to avoiding having sage grouse listed under the *Endangered Species Act*.

Jim Hubbard, U.S. Forest Service

- At present, there are concerns about fires in a number of states in the U.S. West, including California, Oregon, Nevada and Idaho.
- Climatic conditions in the U.S. West are unlikely to change in the foreseeable future.
- Droughts are leading to longer fire seasons.
- Collaboration among stakeholders and on a regional basis is needed in order to address fires.
- A failure to act leads to risk being transferred to another time and place.
- Communities are developing fire protection plans.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Janis G. Johnson, Senator
Co-Chair
Canada-United States
Inter-Parliamentary Group

Gord Brown, M.P.
Co-Chair
Canada-United States
Inter-Parliamentary Group

Appendix

U.S. STATES REPRESENTED IN THE WESTERN GOVERNORS' ASSOCIATION

Alaska

Arizona

California

Colorado

Hawaii

Idaho

Kansas

Montana

Nebraska

Nevada

New Mexico

North Dakota

Oklahoma

Oregon

South Dakota

Texas

Utah

Washington

Wyoming

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group
ACTIVITY	2014 Annual Meeting of the Western Governors' Association (WGA)
DESTINATION	Colorado Springs, Colorado, United States of America
DATES	June 9 to 11, 2014
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Hon. Doug Black Hon. Percy Downe
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Mr. Massimo Pacetti, M.P. Mr. Jasbir Sandhu, M.P.
STAFF	Ms. June Dewetering, Senior Advisor
TRANSPORTATION	\$ 7,383.42
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 5,914.10
HOSPITALITY	\$ 0.00
PER DIEMS	\$ 1,100.12
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$ 0.00
MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES	\$ 3,315.96
TOTAL	\$ 17,711.92