

Western Governors Supportive of Renewable Energy Research, Development and Transmission

In 2004 the Western Governors' Association launched its "Clean and Diversified Energy" initiative for the western U.S. and several Canadian provinces and passed Policy Resolution 04-13, which "identified the need for new clean and diversified energy sources for transportation, buildings, electricity, and other needs." The Resolution also outlined four important goals:

1. Additional development of 30,000 megawatts of clean energy by 2015 from resources such as solar, wind, geothermal, biomass, clean coal technologies, and advanced natural gas technologies;
2. A 20 percent increase in energy efficiency by 2020;
3. An ability to meet the transmission needs of the West for the next 25 years;
4. Strategies to better position the Western energy system to respond to new environmental challenges, including potential limitations on emissions.

Since the 2004 meeting, the Western Governors' Association (WGA) has formed the Clean and Diversified Energy Advisory Committee and met this past June with Utility CEOs to forge the next steps toward meeting the West's electricity needs. "The good news is that the West has much of the nation's best renewable resources," said Gov. Dave Freudenthal (WY), former WGA Chairman. "This

region is also home to the nation's largest fossil fuel resources. The bad news is that the nation has not adequately invested in research and development and energy infrastructure to tap these resources."

Governors Take Next Step Toward Meeting the West's Energy Needs

During the Western Governors' Association June 2008 annual meeting they launched a partnership with the electricity industry, environmental interests,



western Canadian provinces and the U.S. Department of Energy to identify areas rich in renewable energy resources and associated transmission needs. "Our Western Renewable Energy Zones project will help build the consensus necessary to expeditiously develop the transmission to move power from renewable resource rich areas to consumers," said WGA Chairman, Governor Jon Huntsman, Jr. (UT). The governors and CEOs agreed to

strengthen communications between the utilities and states on ways to reduce electricity demand, accelerate the deployment of low-carbon emission generation, and improve the operation of the transmission system. Governor Freudenthal said the enormity of the challenge also requires close collaboration with the federal government. "I'm not one who is comfortable inviting the federal government to help, but they need to act now if we are going to meet the energy and climate change challenges we face," Freudenthal said. "We cannot afford half measures."

Specifically, the governors said the West and the nation need:

- a) Massive expansion of the federal commitment to energy research and development;
- b) Consistent, long-term policies to incentivize deployment of renewable and other low-carbon resources;
- c) Responsive land management policies to enable the timely development of the West's resources and associated transmission, while protecting critical environmental values; and
- d) Clear, long-term federal policies on greenhouse gas emissions.

The Western governors adopted a resolution stating their position and the actions needed to address transmission issues. It's available on the Web at www.westgov.org.

Call for Information!

At a time when our region's leadership is dedicated to supporting research and development and delivery of renewable and alternative energy sources, what have our region's researchers and entrepreneurs been doing to further the knowledge and application of such energy technologies?

How does the development and delivery of new energy sources impact the rural West?

The contributors in this issue of *Rural Connections* shed some light on a few projects underway in the region to develop renewable energy. Several of these include benefits for rural communities.

The WRDC acknowledges there are many renewable energy research projects being conducted throughout the West; new business ventures that have resulted from the research; and educational and assessment tools being developed to assist landowners and communities.

We welcome you to contact us with news about your research projects, businesses and tools so we may share them with our stakeholders.

Please send details to the WRDC at wrdc@usu.edu.