

Canada – United States
Inter-Parliamentary Group
Canadian Section



Groupe interparlementaire
Canada – États-Unis
Section canadienne

Report of the Canada–United States Inter-Parliamentary Group

Western Governors' Association Annual Meeting

By videoconference

From June 30 to July 1, 2021

Report

DELEGATION MEMBERS AND STAFF

From 30 June – 1 July 2021 Senator Mobina Jaffer and Members of Parliament Randy Hoback and Tom Kmiec attended the 2021 Annual Meeting of the Western Governors' Association (WGA) on behalf of the Canadian Section of the Canada–United States Inter-Parliamentary Group. Members were supported by Mr. Brett Capwell, Advisor to the Canadian Section.

WESTERN GOVERNORS' ASSOCIATION

The WGA includes the governors from 19 states in the Western United 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 EVENT

The WGA generally holds a meeting each winter and summer, though the Canadian section of the Canada–United States Inter-Parliamentary Group generally do not attend the winter meetings. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, a summer meeting was not held in 2020, and the WGA's 2021 Annual Meeting – it's summer meeting – was held virtually.

Participating at the WGA's 2021 Annual Meeting enables members of the Canadian Section of the Canada–United States Inter-Parliamentary Group to find points of convergence in respective policies, initiate dialogue on points of divergence, encourage exchanges of information and promote better understanding on shared issues of concern. Moreover, hearing from state governors provides members of the Canadian Section with an opportunity to gather information about important state-level issues that may affect Canada.

The following 16 Governors participated virtual meeting: Governors Kate Brown (Oregon) as WGA Chair, Vice Chair Brad Little (Idaho), Mike Dunleavy (Alaska), Doug Ducey (Arizona), Gavin Newsom (California), Jared Polis (Colorado), Lou Guerrero (Guam), David Ige (Hawaii), Steve Sisolak (Nevada), Michelle Lujan Grisham (New Mexico), Doug Burgum (North Dakota), Ralph Torres (Northern Mariana Islands), Kevin Stitt (Oklahoma), Kristi Noem (South Dakota), Spencer Cox (Utah), and Mark Gordon (Wyoming).

The 2021 Annual Meeting was comprised of five policy sessions, the introduction of new WGA initiatives – such as the examination of the relationships between state and federal land resource management entities – and remarks from the Incoming Chair, Idaho Governor Brad Little. Below is a summary of the policy sessions.

Welcome and Opening Remarks: WGA Chair, Oregon Governor Kate Brown

- Current WGA Chair, Oregon Governor Kate Brown, discussed the Electric Vehicles Roadmap Initiative, which aims to expand regional agreement on electric vehicle charging infrastructure across the West. Notably, Governors from eight western states – Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming – have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to provide a framework for creating an electric vehicle corridor across major transportation routes in this region. This program is linked to the Regional Electric Vehicle Plan for the West (REV West), which focuses on increasing the adoption of zero-emission vehicles.

The Future of Energy

- Secretary of Energy Jennifer Granholm discussed how the Department of Energy manages a significant percentage of the United States' research and development of clean energy technology as well as its efforts to reduce the cost of solar and hydrogen energy. She also highlighted certain carbon capture programs in the western states. The Secretary went on to promote how President Biden's "American Jobs Plan" would advance the country's clean energy goals.

Public Land Challenges

- Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland discussed how the Department of the Interior manages more lands in western states than any other land manager. Alongside Governors Michelle Lujan Grisham (New Mexico), Jared Polis (Colorado), Doug Burgum (North Dakota), Kevin Stitt (Oklahoma), and Lou Guerrero (Guam), the Secretary discussed the Biden Administration's plans and actions on issues such as wildfire resilience, the role of National Parks, capping abandoned oil wells, wildlife management, oil well drilling, seashore protection, and First Nation commitments.

Shared Stewardship

- Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack discussed how the Shared Stewardship strategy collaborates between western states and the federal government through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Governors Brad Little (Idaho), David Ige (Hawaii), Jared Polis (Colorado), and Doug Burgum (North Dakota) discussed select issues with the Secretary, including USDA pandemic assistance to agriculture and forestry, such as compensation for dairy losses and livestock destruction measures.

Rebuilding Economies after COVID-19

- Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo discussed economic prosperity in western states, the effects COVID-19 has had on state and local economies, and the steps that states and the federal government can take to promote economic growth throughout the western states. The Secretary was joined by Governors Mike Dunleavy (Alaska), Ralph Torres (Northern

Mariana Islands), Kristi Noem (South Dakota), and Steve Sisolak (Nevada) to discuss issues including tourism during the pandemic, broadband, market access to U.S. beef markets, as well as drought and addressing climate change.

Address by Jason Kenney, Premier of Alberta

- Alberta Premier Jason Kenney gave an address to the conference on Canada Day. He shared the province's progress with respect to its economic rebound from COVID-19, energy, and collaboration across the border with Western Governors. In particular, the premier discussed Alberta's approach to COVID-19 related lockdowns, its new law requiring mandatory paid leave for vaccine appointments, its pandemic supports for small businesses, relaxing border restrictions, the 15% of Albertans that are vaccine hesitant and the corresponding introduction of vaccine "open for summer" lotteries, the operation of its Indigenous Opportunities Corporation, Alberta's recovery plan that put \$10 billion into infrastructure programs with an additional \$20 billion in coming years, and Alberta's reduction of its corporate tax rates by one-third, giving it a lower combined provincial-federal corporate tax rate than all other Canadian provinces and all but six U.S. states. With respect to Alberta's natural resources, the premier noted that oil sands producers have committed to net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, and that the province is increasing its natural gas production. The premier also thanked the state of Montana for their vaccination efforts toward commercial truckers crossing the Montana-Alberta border during the pandemic.

RESOLUTIONS

The following policy resolutions were passed during the WGA's 2021 Annual Meeting:

- [Disaster Preparedness and Response](#);
- [Transportation Infrastructure in the Western United States](#);
- [Water Resource Management in the West](#);
- [Cleaning Up Abandoned Hardrock Mines in the West](#); and
- [Water Quality in the West](#)

Respectfully submitted,

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| Hon. Michael L. MacDonald, Senator Co-Chair Canada–United States Inter-Parliamentary Group | Hon. John McKay, P.C., M.P. Co-Chair Canada–United States Inter-Parliamentary Group |
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Travel Costs

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| ASSOCIATION | Canada–United States Inter-Parliamentary Group |
| ACTIVITY | Western Governors' Association Annual Meeting |
| DESTINATION | By videoconference |
| DATES | From June 30 to July 1, 2021 |
| DELEGATION | |
| SENATE | Hon. Mobina S.B. Jaffer, Q.C. |
| HOUSE OF COMMONS | Randy Hoback Tom Kmiec |
| STAFF | Brett Capwell |
| TRANSPORTATION | \$ 0.00 |
| ACCOMMODATION | \$ 0.00 |
| HOSPITALITY | \$ 0.00 |
| PER DIEMS | \$ 0.00 |
| OFFICIAL GIFTS | \$ 0.00 |
| MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES | \$ 1,271.36 |
| TOTAL | \$ 1,271.36 |