

**Testimony of Matthew H. Mead, Governor of Wyoming
Before the
United States House of Representatives
Committee on Natural Resources**

**Respecting State Authority, Responsibilities and Expertise
Regarding Resource Management and Energy Development**

Chairman Bishop, Ranking Member Grijalva, and Members of the House Committee on Natural Resources, my fellow governors and I thank you for the opportunity to speak today. We are honored to be here. Each of us will speak briefly. We are happy to answer questions you may have.

I am Governor of the State of Wyoming. I was re-elected in November 2014 and am now serving my second term.

At the end of June, I was elected Chairman of the Western Governors' Association (WGA), which represents governors of 19 western states and 3 US-flag islands. I will serve as Chairman for one year. The WGA submitted testimony for today on behalf of Western Governors as a group and my remarks are ancillary to that submission.

The West is a vast, varied place and each western state has its own specific concerns and viewpoints. Yet western states share challenges, goals, and opportunities regarding natural resources – for example, in the areas of water, wildlife, forests and energy development. Western Governors, through the WGA, seek areas of commonality where we can reach consensus to find solutions, act cooperatively, and benefit all our states. The WGA is a dynamic organization.

Each incoming WGA Chairman designates an initiative – an area of focus during that governor's tenure as Chairman. Recent initiatives, prior to mine, have included drought and getting outdoors in the West. My initiative is the Endangered Species Act (ESA), and it is aimed at reforming and improving the ESA. There is much room for improvement and in the coming year, after the WGA has studied the ESA and received public input, Western Governors will be able to make recommendations to improve it.

The value of bipartisan cooperation on western issues through the WGA cannot be overstated. When people get along, as we do in the WGA, people get things done. We care a great deal about the West and its future. Political acrimony achieves nothing and we Western Governors choose civil discourse. We communicate regularly, speak candidly, listen to different opinions, and partner with non-government organizations as we work toward agreements that are acceptable to all members and lead to

constructive action. A hallmark of leadership is the ability to achieve results – to be proactive and productive. The WGA provides a good leadership model.

Each of us respects the authority of the other states. We wish for the federal government and federal agencies to show the same respect for western states that we show each other. The WGA testimony submitted for the hearing today provides details of how the federal government can better recognize state authority, responsibilities and expertise. We stand ready to work with the Committee and Congress, with federal agencies and others, to keep the West the great place it is today and make it greater still in years to come. Thank you again for your time today.