

Opinion: Western governor best choice to lead Interior

By Jim Ogsbury

On Jan, 20, 2017, Donald Trump will be inaugurated as the 45th president of the United States. The installation of a new administration naturally presents an opportunity to reset the state-federal relationship, and Western Governors' Association looks forward to working with the president-elect in that endeavor.

In the meantime, WGA is urging the appointment of a sitting western Governor to the critical cabinet post of Interior secretary. Department of the Interior operations have disproportionate impacts on WGA member states. The jurisdictional area of the Bureau of Reclamation, for example, is entirely within our footprint. The Bureau of Land Management administers 264 million acres of public lands, the vast majority of which are located in the West. The policy issues confronted by the department – from endangered species to water scarcity to tribal matters – have profound and unique impacts on the West.

No one is in a better position to lead Interior than the governor of a western state. Western governors work closely with departmental bureaus on a daily basis and have a deep appreciation for the challenges faced jointly by Interior and the states. Western governors acquit themselves with honor, dignity and integrity as the chief executives of their respective states. WGA has no doubt that such an appointment would visit great credit upon the new administration.

You can learn more about the presidential transition when the governors convene Dec. 13-14 for their winter meeting in San Diego. The meeting opens with a keynote by David Eagles, the

director of the Center for Presidential Transition at the Partnership for Public Service. That address will be followed by a transition roundtable featuring the governors.

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