

**Position Paper**  
**Public Education Programs to Promote Energy Conservation**  
**And**  
**Clean, Diversified Energy Use in the West**

**A Proposed Partnership among the Western Governors' Association,  
The Western Association of Counties, and  
Western Cooperative Extension**

**The Western Situation**

In the report to the Western Governors' Association (WGA) titled, *Clean Energy, a Strong Economy and a Healthy Environment*, from the Clean and Diversified Energy Advisory Committee (CDEAC), the following regional issues were identified:

- “The West is the fastest growing region of the country,
- Energy shortages and price spikes have become commonplace in the global energy picture,
- Reliance on natural gas as a fuel source for electricity production has dramatically increased, and has tripled in price,
- That the West must act now to ensure it will have a diverse supply of secure, environmentally responsible and affordable energy well in the future, and
- It is certain that the West will require more capacity in 2015.”

The Western Governors' Association, understanding these issues and recognizing the need for action, adopted a policy resolution at its recent summer meeting that establishes the following goals as outlined in the CDEAC report:

- “Develop an additional 30,000 megawatts of clean energy by 2015,
- Increase energy efficiency 20% by 2020, and
- Ensure, secure reliable transmission for the next 25 years.”

**Energy Efficiency and the National Situation**

Coincidentally, the U.S. Congress is looking for solutions to many of these same issues at a national level. The House of Representatives' Subcommittee on Energy has also been concerned with energy efficiency and conservation. **Understanding that any increases in energy efficiency must involve changes in actions of the general public, business, and industry through educational programs, the subcommittee intends to introduce H.R. 5643, entitled the “Energy Technology Transfer Act,” Thursday, June 22<sup>nd</sup> creating an “Energy Extension Service.”** Educational programs funded through this act would help guide the public to take advantage of incentives available through the Department of Energy and other agencies and organizations.

Cooperative Extension, named in the bill, is in place within every state and trust territory and has the capability to provide the public educational programs to change attitudes, habits, and actions as it has done so many times in the past.

### **The Cooperative Extension System**

Cooperative Extension (CES) is a comprehensive system of educators that provides high quality educational programs matched to the needs of modern society. As a partnership among federal, state and local governments, educational programs are offered in every city and county in the country. Established by Congress in 1914, the nationwide Cooperative Extension System operates a unique partnership among government and 75 land grant universities (including 18 historically black institutions) and all of the 1994 Native American institutions.

Cooperative Extension works with many audiences including homeowners, manufacturers, consumers and small businesses on a daily basis. Energy conservation programs fit very well into the organization's educational agenda. The youth development and educational program of CES is 4-H. Today's youth are focusing on science, engineering, and technology in addition to the traditional programs. Youth educational programs have proven their value through the years – "train the youth, train the parents."

Creation of an "Energy Extension Service" as part of the Department of Energy's effort would be done through the competitive grant process, by working through and with the existing structure through the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Cooperative States Research, Education and Extension Service, thereby avoiding duplication, saving the costs of creating new infrastructure, and taking advantage of the established network, organizational credibility and trust, and research based information of Cooperative Extension.

### **Proposed Partnership**

Given the overlapping interests of Congress, the U.S. Department of Energy, the Western Governors' Association, the Western Association of Counties, and the Cooperative Extension System, the WGA is requested to support CES to become the nations' educational delivery system for energy education to promote energy conservation and increased efficiency through DOE funding support. In the West, the Western Extension Directors desire to develop a working partnership with the WGA and the Western Association of Counties to develop and deliver energy educational programs in each state that meet the needs of society and the respective state.

The funding support would come from the proposed competitive grant funds in DOE currently being considered by the Subcommittee on Energy of the House Science Committee as a targeted effort. States already provide significant matching funds. With

increased federal support from DOE, Cooperative Extension can assist the public to meet the goal of a 20% increase in energy efficiency by 2020.

**Cooperative Extension in the western states requests support for this bill from the Western Governors' Association. We believe that much public good will come from this joint effort.**

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