



Western Associations Meet to Promote State-Federal Cooperation

By Edgar Ruiz, Executive Director
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On August 25, several CSG West staff members participated in a Western State and Local Government Associations Summit in Denver, Colorado. The summit, hosted by the Western Governors' Association, provided an opportunity for western and national association staff to discuss ways to strengthen state-federal relations.

The associations represented at the summit included the Western Governors' Association, CSG West, the Western State Land Commissioners Association, the Conference of Western Attorneys General, the Western Forestry Leadership Coalition and the Council of Western State Foresters, the Western Interstate Energy Board, the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region, the Western States Air Resources Council, the Western States Water Council, the National Governors Association, the National Association of Counties, and the Environmental Council of the States.

The summit began with brief presentations from participants about the work of their respective associations, particularly in the area of state-federal relations. Representatives of the western organizations which adopted the "Principles to Clarify and Strengthen the State-Federal Relationship" provided an overview of that document, which was submitted to Congressional leaders and the White House last December. They also shared highlights of a February visit to Washington, D.C. that included meetings with the White House and Congressional and agency staff.

Summit participants discussed the importance of "early, meaningful, substantive and ongoing" consultation, particularly as it relates to proposed regulations or laws that may affect states. Since consultation processes with state and local governments vary among federal agencies, the challenge will be in identifying a process or a set of recommendations that the associations can agree upon, and that would not unduly burden federal entities with unreasonable state and local government consultation requirements.

The association representatives at the summit agreed that at a time when both the President and Congressional leaders generally favor reductions in federal regulations affecting states and localities, there is an opportunity to redefine the state-federal relationship in a manner that achieves enhanced cooperative federalism. This includes requesting greater consistency among agencies in reaching out to states and state officials, and limiting the practice of what some called "forum shopping," or consulting only with a select group of states, state officials or associations to minimally satisfy consultation requirements.

The attending representatives agreed to continue working together to share information and improve the state consultation process. The group will be convening quarterly conference calls in the coming months to maintain a focus on realigning the state-federal relationship and identify ways to achieve common objectives.



Related Links:

[CSG West Policy Directive 2017-01 Related to State-Federal Relation](#)

[Principles to Clarify and Strengthen the State-Federal Relationship](#)